DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 388 CS 217 069

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|---|---|
| TITLE | Literacy for ALL Students: The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework. |
| INSTITUTION | Rhode Island State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, Providence. |
| PUB DATE | 1996-00-00 |
| NOTE | 98p. |
| PUB TYPE | Collected Works - General (020) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Academic Standards; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Curriculum; *English Instruction; *Language Arts; Professional Development; Program Effectiveness; *State Standards; Student Evaluation |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Rhode Island |

ABSTRACT

This framework is designed to serve as a general map for the development of English language arts curricula by schools, school districts, or collaboratives. It is not a curriculum guide. Rather, it provides a structure that local agencies can employ in planning curriculum and instruction tailored to their own needs and circumstances. This framework outlines the English language arts standards all Rhode Island students should meet in order to communicate effectively, make decisions, solve social and work-related problems, and continue learning throughout their lives. After an introduction, sections of the framework are: (1) Critical Beliefs about English Language Arts; (2) Vision Statement; (3) The Rhode Island Standards; (4) Assessment; (5) Professional Development; and (6) Evaluation of Existing Programs. (Contains a 27-item glossary; names and addresses of 14 professional organizations; and an 88-item list of annotated references. An appendix contains a report on developing the common core of learning goals.) (RS)

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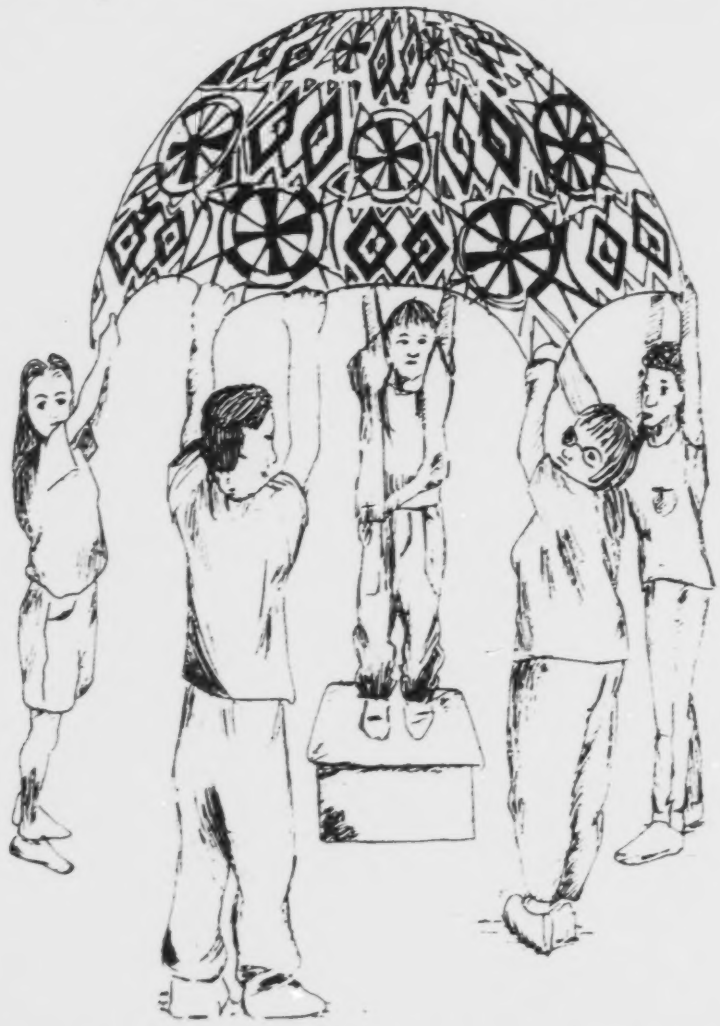
# Literacy for ALL Students



## The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework

Published by the
Rhode Island Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education
1996

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# Literacy for ALL Students

The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework

Published by the
Rhode Island Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education
1996

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June 30, 1996

Dear Colleagues,

This curriculum framework is the culmination of two years work by scores of individuals. It is, however, only a beginning -- the real work of creating change at the classroom level lies ahead of us.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and Commissioner Peter McWalters for their vision of education reform established in the Regents Strategic Plan. Without these priorities, the frameworks document and our high hopes for the future would not be a reality.

There are several groups and individuals who need to be acknowledged - without their support and dedication this project would not reflect the high levels of quality and insightfulness it contains.

*The English Language Arts Framework Development Committee,* whose members are listed individually within the framework, maintained an open-mindedness and willingness to work with one another that is rarely seen in large groups with so much at stake. By keeping their eyes on the welfare of our students, they were able to reach consensus on the critical issues facing educators today.

*The Rhode Island State Council of the International Reading Association, the Rhode Island Council of Teachers of English, and the Rhode Island Writing Project,* whose members contributed both individually and as a body, served as 'critical friends' and were invaluable in shaping the philosophies embodied in this framework.

*Dr. William Oehlkers,* the chairman and guiding light of the project, *Susan Kaplan,* who kept us grounded in the classroom, and *Renie Cervone,* who kept us all together and on track.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone involved in creating Rhode Island's English Language Arts Framework.

Sincerely,

Marie C. DiBiasio, Ed.D.
Director, Office of Instruction

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Many members of the broader Rhode Island community -- including parents, business and industry representatives, as well as many teachers and educators -- participated by providing feedback on earlier drafts of this document and at different stages of its development. Their input was invaluable in shaping the final form of this framework.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Educational Expectations in a Democratic Society

As we move into the 21st century, the well-being of the people of Rhode Island depends more than ever on their level of educational attainment. The challenges of living in a technologically advanced and democratic society demand that all of us possess the knowledge and skills needed to support ourselves, our families, our communities and our state. Indeed, as the nations of our world become increasingly interdependent, the knowledge and skills with which we once managed our affairs will no longer suffice. It is not enough for only a portion of our populace to excel academically. Meeting the challenges of the next century will mean mobilizing the talents and energy of all Rhode Islanders.

Not only does our future prosperity require a universally well-educated populace, but our democratic values demand that all citizens be given the same chance to realize their full potential. The time has come to reaffirm our nation's promise of equal educational opportunity. We must commit ourselves fully to the principle that all children can learn and have something meaningful to contribute to society.

A crucial step in making this ideal a reality is the establishment of high expectations for all students. As John Dewey once wrote, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children." With appropriate support, every child can achieve at high levels.

High levels of achievement imply a commitment to excellence in education for all students. We must be aware that students with severely challenging conditions should have opportunities to achieve success at their personally highest levels possible. We should not lower standards in advance for those students, but rather provide them with access, support and encouragement.

We must never lose faith in our democratic vision or dismiss any child or group of children because they have not yet lived up to our aspirations for them. To do so would be to betray the very democratic ideals that we declare ourselves to hold. By setting high expectations for all students, we affirm our commitment to democracy.

1.

## The National Education Reform Initiative

The present document is but one piece of a larger, national education reform movement, the origins of which can be traced to the publication in 1983 of "A Nation At Risk," a federal report calling for renewed national commitment to educational excellence. Commissioned by the Reagan administration, it called on families, teachers, and schools to set higher standards for student achievement.

"A Nation At Risk" focused national attention on the need for reform, but progress was slow. Disappointed with the rate of change, the National Governors Association and the Bush administration collaborated in 1991 to formulate a set of six national education goals to be achieved by the year 2000. Among these goals were that American students achieve "demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter" and that "all students learn to use their minds."

The national education goals culminated in the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* in 1994, a bipartisan effort led by the Clinton administration. In addition to increasing the number of national education goals from six to eight, it calls on states to construct broad-based teams to formulate and adopt "world-class" standards and performance assessments for all students. The new legislation guarantees that 95% of Goals 2000 funding to states will go directly to schools and local districts, on a competitive basis, to help them achieve the new standards.

*The 21st Century Commission published "Educating ALL Our Children" in 1992. Among its many recommendations was that educators, families, business leaders, and community members should collaboratively develop challenging student performance standards appropriate to the 21st century.*

## Education Reform in Rhode Island

As did many other states, Rhode Island already had its own education reform initiative underway when Goals 2000 became law. Formed by Governor Sundlun in 1991 to draft a plan for Rhode Island's educational renewal, the 21st Century Commission published "Educating ALL Our Children" in 1992. Among its many recommendations was that educators, families, business leaders and community members should collaboratively develop challenging student performance standards appropriate to the 21st century.

Acting on both this recommendation and Goals 2000, the Rhode Island Department of Education distributed an education survey to the people of Rhode Island in 1994. It asked the following question: *"What should all young adults in Rhode Island know and be able to do to meet the responsibilities and challenges of the 21st*

*The Rhode Island Department of Education distributed an education survey to the people of Rhode Island in 1994. It asked the following question:* ***"What should all young adults in Rhode Island know and be able to do to meet the responsibilities and challenges of the 21st century?"*** *People's responses fell into four broad categories -- communication, problem solving, a common body of knowledge, and responsibility -- which form the basis of* ***Rhode Island's Common Core of*** *Learning.*

*century?"* People's responses fell into four broad categories -- communication, problem solving, a common body of knowledge,

and responsibility -- which form the basis of **Rhode Island's Common Core of** Learning. These categories reflect the basic competencies all students should achieve at all grade levels and in all subject areas. (A copy of this report is included in the appendix of this framework.)

The content area frameworks, of which the present document is one, describe how the competencies outlined in the Common Core manifest themselves in particular areas of the curriculum. They offer a map of how subject matter and instruction can be organized to achieve these competencies across the content areas and at various performance levels.

A key concept is that the four categories of the Common Core permeate every facet of the curriculum from kindergarten through high school. Students' communication skills, for example, are the concern of the mathematics, science and health teacher, not just the teacher of English language arts. Art and physical education teach problem solving to kindergartners as well as high school seniors. The common body of knowledge shared by all literate Americans is transmitted in first grade music as well as the advanced placement history class. And the whole range of educational influences that children and young adults encounter in their formative years should teach responsibility.

The Common Core of Learning, the frameworks, and the larger reform initiative of which they are a part constitute a significant departure from past reform efforts in Rhode Island. In the early 1980s the Basic Education Program (BEP) established certain baseline input standards (such as health and safety requirements) deemed necessary for all children to achieve minimally acceptable levels of academic competence. The Common Core and frameworks endorse these standards as minimum requirements but aim much higher in establishing challenging performance standards for all students. All students will be expected not only to acquire knowledge but also to demonstrate their ability to access, evaluate, and use it responsibly in a variety of contexts. Along with these new standards comes the recognition that high expectations require state-of-the-art curriculum, instruction and assessment, combining established practice with recent innovations, as well as a commitment to helping all students achieve their full potential.

# 1. CRITICAL BELIEFS ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## The Framework

This framework is designed to serve as a general map for the development of English language arts curricula by schools, school districts, or collaboratives. It is not a curriculum guide. Rather, it provides a structure that local agencies can employ in planning curriculum and instruction tailored to their own needs and circumstances. As a counterpart to its companion documents in mathematics, science and other content areas, this framework outlines the English language arts standards all Rhode Island students should meet in order to communicate effectively, make decisions, solve social and work-related problems, and continue learning throughout their lives.

The English Language Arts Framework guides school districts to prepare students for a changing workplace and a changing world. Implicit in this framework is the requirement that students read and write more frequently, fluently and skillfully. However, the framework supports the rights of districts and schools to make decisions about which texts and materials best support the educational needs of their students. Further, school districts should identify and implement the most appropriate and best instructional and assessment methods and strategies for their students to reach high standards.

Motivated by current demands for change by families, educators, civic leaders, the business community, and other concerned citizens, this framework is supported by a strong research base and is consistent with the recommendations of professional organizations such as the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. While it is part of the larger, national education reform effort, it nonetheless recognizes that the home is the first site of language acquisition, upon which the community and school build further proficiency, broadening and enhancing a child's linguistic repertoire. Schools and school districts are the chief agents of education reform. The state, which shoulders the responsibility for maintaining a system of public education, offers guidance and support, such as this document provides.

## English Language Arts

Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning states that "one of the hallmarks of an educated person is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and converse effectively. People with well-developed communication skills understand others and express themselves well."

Literacy, the key term for these skills, has a broader, more complex, and more demanding definition in today's world; students need to be prepared to be active, critical, and creative users of print, spoken, and visual language. This definition of literacy implies an understanding of technology as well, as they sort through enormous amounts of information to make informed decisions as literate citizens. Language arts instruction in the school focuses on the acquisition of these skills and is inseparable from the transmission of the facts and concepts that comprise the shared body of knowledge of our national culture. So conceived, the language arts permeate every aspect of society and, hence, of the school curriculum from mathematics, science, and technology education to health and physical education and the arts.

*The language arts serve a wide variety of purposes, from the highly abstract and poetic to the practical demands of everyday living. They are integral to sustained inquiry and problem solving and to the formation of individual and cultural identity.*

The language arts serve a wide variety of purposes, from the highly abstract and poetic to the practical demands of everyday living. They are integral to sustained inquiry and problem solving and to the formation of individual and cultural identity. Through language, people not only express themselves and interpret the thoughts and feelings of others but coordinate their actions such that all involved parties can participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Not just in the political process but in the conduct of everyday living, competence in the language arts on the part of all citizens is vital to a democracy.

To develop written literacy, some authorities have emphasized the similarities between oral language and its printed counterpart. They point out, correctly we believe, that a student's growth in reading can be advanced if reading is taught in a manner that parallels the child's growth in oral language. For example, oral language is learned in a rich, contextual setting. Growth in oral language development allows for approximation rather than precision in its early states. Learning to speak occurs in a "speaking community." Children are encouraged to develop language facility if they feel free to take risks as they learn. Reading progress can be facilitated, it is argued, if such conditions are present when reading is being taught.

While we recognize the truth of these assertions, there is more to the story. Reading is not simply "talk written down." Written text has its own rules, and even more important, written text places demands on the emerging reader that are different from learning to talk. This difference is evident in the fact that virtually all children of normal intelligence learn to speak their native language simply by being immersed in a literate culture.

However, most children require specific instruction if they are to learn to read. It is for this reason that children around the world go to school, even as the vast majority of them enter the school with a reasonably developed oral language. In brief, the majority of children need help in determining how the written language works. Teachers work to refine oral language but provide specific instruction in reading even as they build on students' emerging literacy.

*Some children seem to learn the "rules" of reading with a minimum of direct adult intervention. Others require deliberate, intensive instruction if they are to make adequate progress. Most of them need specific help in unlocking words.*

While theorists continue to debate the issue, we hold that the most acceptable view of the reading process is to view it as a balance between so-called background knowledge (also referred to as *schema* or *non-visual information*) and print or visual information which includes what is commonly called *phonics*. All readers use both; when a student is unable to use either background information or an understanding of the rules of print, e.g. left to right orientation, grapho-phonic correspondence, the student is likely to make less than optimal progress.

The application of theory to real world classroom instruction, however, is no simply matter. Children, like fingerprints, vary widely as any classroom teacher can attest. In reading, for example, a very few children arrive in kindergarten with the ability to interact proficiently with print. Others with a strong oral language and with exposure to a rich print environment appear to learn the rudiments of reading through a kind of educational osmosis; growth is relatively effortless.

On the other hand, most children require specific instruction in the fundamentals of print. Some, in fact, have to be taken almost by the hand and shown how print functions if they are to learn to read. In this case, reading instruction needs to be systematic and very direct.

What does all this mean? Having adapted a broad theoretical position on the need for balance in reading instruction, we believe one size does not fit all. Some children seem to learn the "rules" of reading with a minimum of direct adult intervention. Others require deliberate, intensive instruction if they are to make

adequate progress. Most of them need specific help in unlocking words.

It is the prerogative of the local school district to adjust this model in a manner that meets the needs of its students. It is the teachers who must further adapt instruction to their students' requirements, adroitly mixing both visual and non-visual elements to achieve proper balance.

The language arts are the cornerstone of an individual's education and include the full array of language practices related to understanding and communicating in all content areas and in all domains of life. In addition to reading, writing, and conversing, they include the ability to interpret the diverse array of visual and auditory texts of a highly technological society, including photographs, charts, advertisements, and computer information networks, to name just a few. Language is probably the most distinctive and universal of all human attributes, and competence in its use is vital to a meaningful life.

*Classroom instruction in the language arts should mirror the way communication occurs in the world outside of school, covering a wide range of social, aesthetic, and work-related contexts.*

**Language Acquisition and Instruction**

Ongoing research on how children acquire language yields several broad conclusions, around which there is a wide consensus. First, language is acquired through interaction with other people. Such interactions often include reading and being read to aloud. Second, language is acquired best in the context of purposeful activity, where the child directly experiences the results of his or her own word usage. Successful language use reinforces continued acquisition, as children learn to exercise increasing control over their environment. Third, language acquisition must build upon what came before. The family is the first educator, and subsequent instruction must employ that prior learning. Fourth, fluency is achieved not by rigid adherence to language conventions from the start but by increasingly more accurate approximations of mature language use. Fifth, despite these common principles of language acquisition, everyone learns language differently, employing his or her own distinctive background knowledge and making unique patterns and connections. These broad conclusions have definite implications for instruction in the English language arts.

First, since growth in language use requires social interaction, language arts instruction should involve reciprocal communication between students and other people, both within

and outside the classroom setting. Classroom instruction in the language arts should mirror the way communication occurs in the world outside of school, covering a wide range of social, aesthetic, and work-related contexts.

Second, students need to use language purposefully: to get something done, to persuade others, to figure something out, to negotiate compromises. The most powerful feedback on how well a student has interpreted and responded to a situation orally or in writing is the result achieved by his or her own efforts, both independently and collaboratively.

Third, language arts instruction should build on earlier successes, beginning with the knowledge and skills students bring with them from home. From this foundation, instruction should challenge students to strengthen their existing literacy skills.

Fourth, students do not advance directly from beginners to accomplished users of English. As they mature they move in stages and progress most rapidly when allowed to approach adult standards gradually rather than immediately. We see this in the home when children's first attempts to communicate are richly rewarded. This incremental development of language, known as approximation, should be encouraged in school and guided so that students grown toward full maturity in literacy.

Fifth, while all students should be expected to achieve high levels of English proficiency, their individuality must be respected. No two people learn language in exactly the same way, nor should they be expected to communicate the same ideas or in the same style. Every person has a unique, productive contribution to make to society. Instruction in the language arts should build upon and advance the unique potential of each student.

Finally, the standards outlined in this framework constitute an interdependent whole. Instruction in one implies instruction in each and all of the others. Moreover, since language use pervades every aspect of our lives, instruction in the language arts must be integral to all the subject areas, not just the "English" or "language arts" curriculum. Ensuring the ability of all students to communicate effectively must be the responsibility of all instructors, in all courses of study.

**English and other languages**

The goal of English language arts instruction remains the proficient use of English, in addition to any other languages a

*For a growing number of students in Rhode Island and the United States as a whole, English is a second language, sometimes a third or even a fourth. These students should be held to the same high standards of English competence as those for whom English is a first language.*



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student may speak. But the path by which students achieve that goal may differ for students whose first language is not English.

For a growing number of students in Rhode Island and the United States as a whole, English is a second language, sometimes a third or even a fourth. These students should be held to the same high standards of English competence as those for whom English is a first language.

At the same time, certain broad principles should be kept in mind. Linguistically, no language is superior to any other. Literacy can occur in any language. Non-English proficient or limited-English proficient students can equal or surpass the academic performance of their English speaking peers, and very often do. The knowledge and skills they already possess should be respected and valued. Non-English proficient and limited-English proficient student who are competent in their first language should therefore be given the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic and academic competence in languages other than English.

## Summary

The English language arts standards outlined in the following pages reflect the educational hopes and aspirations of the people of Rhode Island. Built on the recognition that our future prosperity depends on unprecedented levels of English proficiency, these standards establish high expectations for all students. Achieving our goal will require curricula, instruction, and assessments which combine the best established practices as well as recent innovations. Above all, it will demand that all students achieve at their fullest potential.

# 2.

VISION

Scene: A classroom in Rhode Island
Time: Today, and perhaps tomorrow

It's afternoon as you and your guide enter a fourth grade Rhode Island classroom to peer into today and possibly the future. The room hums with activity, and the students show no signs of winding down despite the lateness of the day. Small groups cluster around computers. Eavesdropping, you pick up the conversation. "We should hear from New Zealand today. It was only last week that their Form I class (grade 4) told us that many homes outside of Auckland get their water from huge concrete cisterns which are filled with rainwater that runs off the rooftops. I wonder what they found out about their water when they tested it."

Another student chimed in, "We've been studying our own water supply. There haven't been any changes in the water quality that I can tell. Those chemistry results are about the same each time."

Another responded, "Let's go log onto e-mail to see if they have answered us. Then we can use the data and the Superstudio software to get our presentation ready. It's due next week. And if it is really good, we can send it to our sister school in England."

The last student in the group added, "This e-mail is sure a lot faster than air mail. I'm glad our college teachers helped us make the contact. It's really neat to think that they will hear from us so soon. I only wish I was hitting one of their beaches instead of getting ready for the next snow storm. It's hard to believe that they are having summer while we are in winter."

You walk away a bit bewildered. What's going on here? What's up in Rhode Island? Computers? Talking with New Zealand? Water monitoring? E-mail? Superstudio? College teachers?

Let's take a closer look at the program in this classroom. In the morning these students had presented oral and written reports on the books they had read. All students had read and discussed *Hatchet*, a popular adventure novel by Gary Paulsen. They used the dictionary to confirm their predictions about vocabulary in the story, as well as to learn to recognize and use phonetic spelling symbols. They used their mathematics skills to find the average

rainfall in Auckland, wrote original poems and spent considerable time on geography skills as they read about New Zealand.

This afternoon they are applying language arts skills to help them investigate and solve a community problem. As responsible citizens, they are working on a local issue: water quality. They became interested in this topic when a well that served the school had become contaminated, and they had to stop drinking from the water fountain until the water was safe again.

Of course, they have gone beyond testing well water. With the help of science professors from a nearby state college, they have taken samples of soil and water from the local reservoir watershed, analyzed this data with kits provided by the school department, and have begun to share their data with far off schools through letters and e-mail. So far they have connected with a school outside of Auckland, New Zealand, and another in London. This inquiry approach began with the questions students and teachers had about their water quality, was carried on in small cooperative groups that included students from the resource room and led to data collection activities. At first they had gathered similar data from another school in Rhode Island, but now they had spread their net further, stretching it over the US and now across the oceans.

*With the help of science professors from a nearby state college, they have taken samples of soil and water from the local reservoir watershed, analyzed this data with kits provided by the school department, and have begun to share their data with far off schools through letters and e-mail. So far they have connected with a school outside of Auckland, New Zealand, and another in London.*

Their teacher was busy during this time demonstrating water and soil testing, using the computer for both obtaining information and sharing it with students as well as guiding students through the inquiry process. The teacher was aided by the pre-service college teachers who were learning how to apply language arts methods to real classroom settings. All agreed that literacy in reading and writing is fundamental to computer literacy. The teachers-to-be spent the majority of their teaching methods course time in the school rather than on the college campus. The college professor was also benefitting as she obtained feedback from her teaching efforts. What language arts strategies actually worked in the classroom? How could reading and writing be tied to subjects such as science as students studied the local water supply? How then could the repertoire of her teacher candidates be enriched?

The English Language Arts Standards

From this brief scenario in our 4th grade classroom, we clearly see the Rhode Island English Language Arts standards in operation. 11.

Nine standards, developed by Rhode Island educators, were created to set higher expectations than ever before for students in Rhode Island. Our goal on this visit is to see how the standards and classroom instruction line up. Would students have the opportunity to meet these challenging expectations?

**Communication: All students will be effective communicators in varied settings and for varied purposes.**

*We certainly saw evidence of effective communication as students worked together to gather water quality data and share it with their peers in New Zealand. They talked with each other, read to obtain information, interpreted and explained their new knowledge by writing traditional reports as well as e-mail messages.*

**Response to Text: All students will demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to a wide variety of text.**

*I watched closely as individuals in the team read for answers to their questions and compared the answers from several sources: science references, magazines and the WorldWide Web.*

**Creation and Presentation of Text: All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.**

*Students whom I observed were writing and recording notes, preparing reports, sharing information with each other and composing messages that were sent to New Zealand and other distant sites via e-mail.*

**Student Voice: All students will demonstrate the power and effectiveness of voice through the language arts.**

*I noticed that no one copied from the board or filled in blanks in a workbook. They all wrote about topics that were significant to them and relevant to the community water quality project.*

**Awareness and Evaluation of Learning Processes: All students will know the processes used to construct and convey meaning through text, and will develop and apply criteria for the evaluation and appreciation of their own and others' texts.**

*I did see one student explain to another how she read the library book on water pollution. First, she decided what questions she wanted answered and then if she got stuck while reading, she said she usually kep going*

*I noticed that no one copied from the board or filled in blanks in a workbook. They all wrote about topics that were significant to them and relevant to the community water quality project.*

*because the problem might clear up as she continued. She seemed to be very aware of how she was going to tackle that book. Because she was reading about the topic from many sources, she was encouraged to set criteria for judging the accuracy of what she was finding and actually found out-dated information in one of her books.*

**Inquiry and Technology: All students will investigage issues and problems using a variety of current and emerging technologies in school and work settings.**

*It's fairly evident that this entire project of studying water quality in the community involved students in inquiry -- in asking and answering their questions -- and using computer technology to get answers from the WorldWide Web as well as to record and analyze data.*

**Enduring Themes: All students will use themes and topics from text to make connections and demonstrate an understanding of commonalities and diversity through exploration of universal issues.**

*From student discussions during a break in their inquiry unit, I asked students whether they were reading any other materials besides text on water quality. They said they were doing an author unit on Gary Paulsen. He has written a number of survival books, e.g. Hatchet. They were not just reading individual titles but thinking about a theme, a universal one, survival in the midst of adversity, present in several of Paulsen's books. I could not help thinking that water is a survival issue too.*

*It's fairly evident that this entire project of studying water quality in the community involved students in inquiry -- in asking and answering their questions -- and using computer technology to get answers from the WorldWide Web as well as to record and analyze data.*

**Literacy and the Community: All students will develop and apply their language skills using the community as a learning laboratory.**

*If ever there was a classroom that dealt with the community, it was this one. Look how they take a community problem, preserving their quality of water, and study it by communicating with the water board, the town hall and area chemists and biologists. They even communicated via e-mail with a doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati who is trying to develop better ways to test for water quality; he helped them with their project.*

**Language Arts and Citizenship: All students will use language effectively and responsibly as members of a democratic society.**

*I overheard some of the students talking about one of the final steps in*

*this project: deciding how to maintain the quality of water in their community. One of them had read a report on the Internet that mentioned lower government spending on monitoring water quality. They were divided as to whether this was a good move. All agreed that they had informed opinions about the matter and began looking up the addresses of their Senators. One student found the Senator's e-mail address on the Thomas web site. I listened as they talked about the best way to write to her. They also discussed the possibility of presenting their views to the local Parent Teacher Organization and inviting local representatives to their classroom.*

Effects on Learning

It was evident that what the students were doing involved the application of new words. They did far more than learning to sound out words and spell them, copying from the board, reading orally, and filling in the blanks in workbooks or bubbles on standardized tests. They were *using* the language arts even as they were learning these processes. They were putting them to use in functional, meaningful ways as they worked on genuine community problems. They did not always work alone but, when appropriate, in small teams, like those increasingly used in business and industry to solve problems.

Scenes and activities like these already exist in some Rhode Island schools. It is critical for the future of the state, however, that *all* Rhode Island students receive an education with similar variety and applications of learning. As long as we are a state and bound together for the common good, we are like the chain that is no stronger than its weakest link.

The first step on the road to creating this *All Kids* agenda is the adoption of world class standards. Only when the entire community is clear as to what we expect students to know and be able to do can we make progress. These standards, which are described on the following pages, serve as an educational umbrella, a framework to guide local districts in Rhode Island to write more specific curricula in the English language arts.

An added advantage of common standards is that they encourage all members of the educational team: the classroom teacher, the pre-service teacher, the students, the college professor, the parents and the community to work together to help meet the high standards which have been established.

*An added advantage of common standards is that they encourage all members of the educational team: the classroom teacher, the pre-service teacher, the students, the college professor, the parents and the community to work together to help meet the high standards which have been established.*

Emphasis on English Language Arts

In a changing world with its new challenges, the English language arts are more important than ever. Technology is best used by individuals who can read, write, and spell! Creating high standards for all students in Rhode Island is the first step in this mile long journey.

In addition to high standards, we are persuaded that the following is also true:

- All children, not just the advantaged, need to take part in new efforts to raise the quality of education. Rhode Island does not have the luxury of wasting any of its children's minds.

- This education must prepare students for the world of work, whether they go on to higher education or pursue a skilled trade in a vocational setting.

- Education for competent citizenship is critical in an age of sound bites and media immersion.

- A whole cloth educational system, K-16, in which the local schools, the teacher education program and the State Department of Education pull together, is vital if we are going to raise the achievement of students.

- The assessment system will measure student understanding and performance -- what all students know and can do.

- Special attention must be given to the increasing numbers of students whose first language is not English, who may not be fully literate in that first language but whose talents, if supported and developed, can contribute to improving the quality of life in Rhode Island.

# 3.

THE RHODE ISLAND STANDARDS

**Standard 1:** COMMUNICATION

**All students will be effective communicators in varied settings and for varied purposes.**

**Standard 2:** RESPONSE TO TEXT

**All students will demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to a wide variety of text.**

**Standard 3:** CREATION AND PRESENTATION OF TEXT

**All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.**

**Standard 4:** STUDENT VOICE

**All students will demonstrate the power and effectiveness of voice through the language arts.**

**Standard 5:** AWARENESS AND EVALUATION OF LEARNING PROCESSES

**All students will know the processes used to construct and convey meaning through text and will develop and apply criteria for the evaluation and appreciation of their own and others' texts.**

**Standard 6:** INQUIRY AND TECHNOLOGY

**All students will investigate issues and problems using a variety of current and emerging technologies in school and work settings.**

**Standard 7:** ENDURING THEMES

**All students will use themes and topics from text to make connections and demonstrate an understanding of commonalities and diversity through exploration of universal issues.**

**Standard 8:** LITERACY AND THE COMMUNITY

**All students will develop and apply their language skills using the community as a learning laboratory.**

**Standard 9:** LANGUAGE ARTS AND CITIZENSHIP

**All students will use language effectively and responsibly as members of a democratic society.**

## *How To Use The Frameworks Document*

*USE IT to start a conversation about improving student achievement in the English language arts.*

*USE IT to evaluate the current English language arts program in your classroom, school or district.*

*USE IT as a reference when planning classes and units for the language arts and other content areas.*

*USE IT too as a self-evaluation, to see if classroom activities are requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the language arts.*

*USE IT as an informational resource for universities and colleges designing teacher-preparation programs and classes.*

*USE IT as a means of revitalizing the teaching of English language arts in your classroom, school and district.*

**Figure 1.**

# *THE INTEGRATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORK IN RHODE ISLAND*

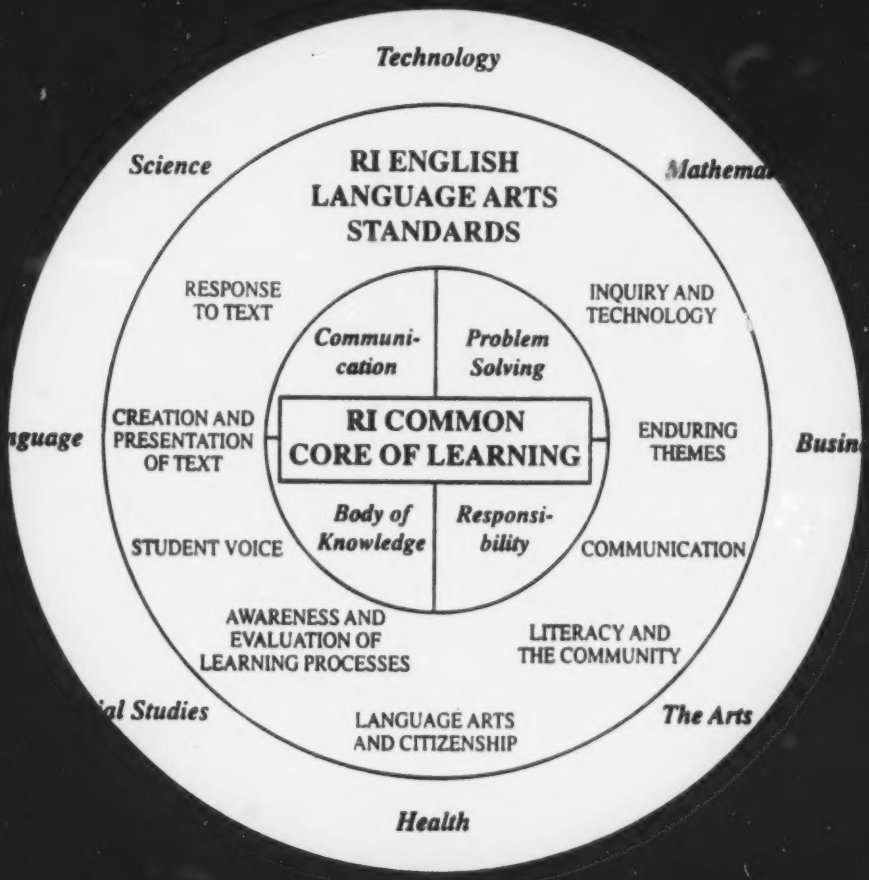


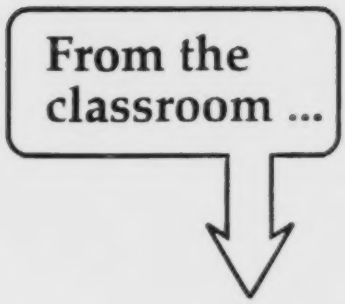

Figure 2.

**Standard 1. COMMUNICATION - All students will be effective communicators in varied settings and for varied purposes.**

*Effective communication is necessary in every aspect of our personal, social, educational, occupational and civic lives. Students will have the ability to listen, speak, view, read and write clearly. Students will understand how to gather and use information to work with others, solve conflicts and share decisions.*

| Descriptors | Level 1 (Grade K-4) | Level 2 (Grade 5-8) |
|---|---|---|
| Students will use language arts for self-understanding and personal expression. | Be aware of ways that communication is used to select, express, and accommodate personal interests, needs and ideas of self and others. | Use communication to select, express, and accommodate personal interests, needs and ideas of self and others. |
| Students will use listening, speaking and non-verbal behavior to clarify and communicate meaning in social settings. | Develop listening and speaking behaviors that enhance verbal communication. | Differentiate between appropriate uses of verbal and non-verbal communication, identify and practice elements of active listening and effective speaking. |
| Students will communicate information gathered from print and non- print media to achieve educational purposes. | Learn to access and utilize information through a variety of media with guidance. | Access and utilize information effectively through a variety of interactions with media. |
| Students will use language to prepare for success in the workplace. | Utilize various strategies to gather information about careers. | Gather information about careers; develop communication skills for the workplace. |
| Students will synthesize information from a variety of sources to make and communicate civic decisions. | Utilize listening, speaking, reading and writing and reading to make and communicate decisions. | Develop informed opinions by evaluating a variety of print and non-print media. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Use communication appropriately to select, express, and accommodate personal interests, needs and ideas of self and others. | Use communication appropriately and effectively to select, express, and accommodate personal interests, needs and ideas of self and others. |
| Develop vocal, content and organizational strategies through a process that enhances understanding and practice of spoken messages and listening behaviors. | Understand that barriers to effective communication exist, develop vocal, content and organizational strategies that accommodates those barriers and enhances understanding and practice of spoken messages and listening behaviors. |
| Access, utilize and apply information effectively through a variety of interactions with media for specific purposes. | Access, utilize and apply information effectively through a variety of interactions with media for independently generated purposes. |
| Gather information about careers; refine communication skills for the workplace. | Gather information about careers; refine communication skills for the workplace. |
| Analyze propaganda, fact, and opinion, presented in various texts to make decisions. | Analyze propaganda, fact, and opinion, presented in various texts; speak, debate and publicize ideas to make decisions. |




*Standard: All students will be effective communicators in varied settings and for varied purposes.*

*Submitted by Denise Carpenter and Margaret Sabo of the Veazie Street School in Providence.*

Students in our 4th grade classes research the accomplishments of famous African-Americans and write two rhyming lines about that person. These lines become part of a 'rap' that is presented during the Black History Assembly at our school.

This year I decided to have the students illustrate famous Black Americans who were included in the rap. Shanda was to portray Judge Rogeree Thompson, Rhode Island's first African-American female court judge. When she could not find a picture of Judge Thompson in my collection of books, I suggested that she visit the library.

The trip to the library was unsuccessful. Mrs. Sabo, the school library media specialist, explained that while Rogeree Thompson is well known in Rhode Island, she may not yet be recognized nationally and therefore would not be found in encyclopedias. Shanda very candidly suggested that they simply call Judge Thompson and ask her for the information.

Mrs. Sabo decided it would be a good experience. She helped the students prepare a concise message, asking Judge Thompson to return the call when she came off the bench. Shanda could barely contain her excitement. She was going to speak to this famous person!

Judge Thompson did call back, and Shanda asked the judge the questions she had prepared. She also invited

Judge Thompson to the school assembly. When Judge Thompson arrived, it was easy for her to pick out Shanda, since she was wearing a judge's black robe as she recited the biographical information she had received. After the performance, Judge Thompson was introduced to the class, and she graciously said a few words to the audience and answered their questions.

To the hushed assembly she said she was present because of Shanda. Her message was that public figures *should* be called on to speak in school. *"All of these figures were once children. Just as they achieved their dreams, you can achieve yours too."* Shanda could barely contain her joy at the judge's presence and expressed her thanks as she walked Judge Thompson to the door.

The next day the teacher guided the children in drafting individual thank you notes. Some students illustrated their notes. After final revisions and editing, students mailed their final copy to Judge Thompson.

This collaboration among the librarian, myself and Shanda made a real impact. All of us, teachers and students, will work together to make future visits from community leaders meaningful experiences.

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Shanda's rap:

Rogeree Thompson, hey hey
Don't you budge
Rhode Island's first black female
District Court Judge

**Standard 2. RESPONSE TO TEXT - All students will demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to a wide variety of text.**

*Students will read, view, comprehend and respond to varied text. Text, in today's world, includes traditional and contemporary poems, plays, stories, letters, essays, interviews, books, magazines, newspapers, visual media, and technical materials.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of text utilizing word identification skills and strategies.** | Develop and use strategies for understanding a variety of print and non-print materials. | Develop, select and use strategies for understanding a variety of print and non-print materials. |
| **Students will respond to varied text.** | Respond to a variety of print and non-print materials. | Demonstrate multiple responses to varied text. |
| **Students will select text for a variety of informational purposes.** | With guidance, access and use information from print and non-print sources by applying, research and technology skills. | Access and use information from print and non-print sources by applying research and technology skills. |
| **Students will identify and evaluate varied text.** | Identify the nature and purpose of varied genre. | Review information from varied text for accuracy, and recognize information that has valid support. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Expand and use a repertoire of strategies for comprehension of a variety of print and non-print materials. | Expand, refine and use strategies for comprehension of a variety of print and non-print materials. |
| Demonstrate multiple responses to a wide range of content area text, integrating language arts with other disciplines. | Use varied text to respond to and apply new knowledge when making transitions to adult life. |
| Independently access, select and use information from print and non-print sources for particular research purposes. | Select, access and use information from a variety of sources to fulfill personal, social, educational and occupational purposes. |
| Evaluate varied text for making decisions and solving intellectual problems. | Determine validity and objectivity of text in terms of authors' purpose and context for making decisions and solving problems throughout all content areas. |

# From the classroom ...

*Submitted by Renee Grant Kane and Barbara Halzel of the Veazie Street School in Providence.*

*Standard: All students will demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to a wide variety of text.*

One of the most important goals in our classroom is to help students work effectively with one another. We believed that one way to accomplish this objective would be to introduce students to authors and illustrators from a variety of cultures whose message was conflict resolution. Further, we thought our efforts would be more successful if this project involved a collaborative partnership; a second grade class and a fourth grade class, an art teacher, library media specialist, computer specialist and parents.

The fourth and second grade partnership studied various authors and illustrators whose text and illustrations depicted ways in which people made decisions to solve conflict. Lists and charts were created as they discussed ways in which problems in the shared books were solved peacefully. Students then discussed ways they could use the same methods in their own lives.

They studied author/illustrators Eric Carle, Ezra Jack Keats and James Ransome. Then pairs of students wrote and illustrated stories of tolerance in the style of the author/illustrator. Other students created posters about peace.

Copies of these books and posters were placed permanently in the library. We will be encouraging students from other grades to write and illustrate their own books on conflict resolution, and these will be added to the bookshelf.

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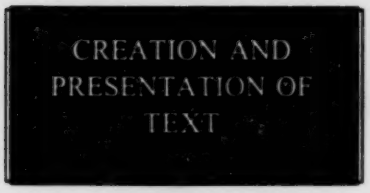
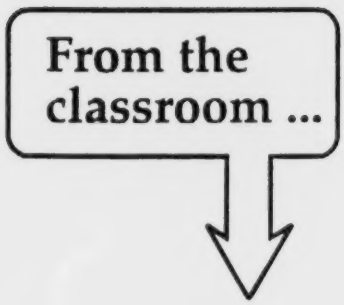



**Standard 3. CREATION AND PRESENTATION OF TEXT - All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.**

*Composing processes include thinking, creating, refining, and presenting text in the major forms of rhetoric, including narration, description, exposition, comparison, contrast and argument.. Awareness of purpose and audience influences the composing strategies of the writer and speaker.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will use process strategies to compose oral and written text.** | Generate draft and revise ideas, begin editing for conventions, share and publish text with guidance. | Compose, share and publish both fiction and non-fiction text. |
| **Students will apply conventions of standard language to create clear and meaningful text.** | Apply basic conventions of standard language with guidance. | Identify and use basic conventions that clarify meaning. |
| **Students will use aesthetic elements of language in oral and written language.** | Imitate patterns of rhythm, rhyme and figurative language in communicating. | Use patterns and figurative language to develop style. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Expand processes to include fiction, non-fiction, as well as technical text. | Refine processes for fiction, non-fiction, and technical text. |
| Identify, select and use conventions that enhance and clarify meaning. | Refine selection and use of conventions that clarify and emphasize meaning. |
| Expand the use of pattern and figurative language to develop style. | Refine the use of pattern and figurative language for a variety of purposes and audiences. |




*Submitted by Nancy Appleton of the North Cumberland Middle School in Cumberland, Rhode Island*

*Standard: All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.*

I have always felt that reading and writing should be taught together. In this activity for my 8th grade class, my students choose the novels they read and respond in writing to these texts, and then share their ideas with classmates.

I place students in groups of 5 to 6 who have chosen the same novel to read. Each week the students meet with their group to discuss the chapters they have read and decide how much they will read before their next meeting. They also meet with me to share their reaction to the text and prepare for writing their response. While one group is meeting with me, the rest of the class will be reading and reflecting on their novels.

I have found it very useful to use yellow sticky labels. Students place these on pages they wish to comment on. They write on the sticky labels, noting what they were thinking as they read. For example, they may react to interesting or effective use of words and language, something that made them smile, connections with their own experiences (including other books), people, films, or anything out of the ordinary. These written comments help students during the discussion period.

Later my students talk with others who have been reading the same books and build confidence in sharing their ideas. They direct their comments and questions to each other, as well as to me. I participate as another member of the group and provide support. I encourage each student

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to make an effort to listen, understand, and respond to what their peers are saying before moving on to the next point. After participating in the group discussions, I have noticed that student notes on the sticky labels become increasingly reflective.

My students hand in written responses at the end of each week. This is not a summary of the story they have read, but a reflection of their thoughts to date. Comments include predictions, the author's style, use of patterns and figurative language, an analysis of humor, and other thoughts about the author's treatment of the different characters in the story.

The weekly responses are about a page in length and students hand them in after the discussion session. The final response to the novel is longer and reflects on the novel as a whole.

Students are assessed on weekly responses and participation in group discussion. Through these integrated strategies, I have an opportunity to monitor closely students' developing skills and to assist them in improving their oral and written communication.

**Standard 4. STUDENT VOICE - All students will demonstrate the power and effectiveness of voice through the language arts.**

*Voice is both an inner and acquired ability which writers and speakers develop from experience and knowledge. Voice allows the author to communicate ideas persuasively, creatively and powerfully.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will recognize that their ideas have worth and power when effectively communicated.** | Develop ideas, topics and stories and explore reasons for choices in communicating. | Explain and defend ideas and topics in their communication. |
| **Students will recognize that their voice has an audience.** | Demonstrate knowledge of different audiences. | Recognize how a variety of audiences affects voice. |
| **Students will develop the confidence and skills to communicate their ideas.** | Speak out and write on ideas topics and stories of personal significance. | Experiment with various voices and styles when speaking and writing for specific purposes. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Develop voice through drafts, revisions, products and reflections; support the worth and power of their ideas. | Expand and refine the power and uniqueness of voice through communication. |
| Continue to develop their voice for specific audiences. | Achieve a balance between voice and audience. |
| Use appropriate voices and styles for varied speaking and writing purposes. | Select and employ an appropriate voice for effectively communicating in a unique style. |

# From the classroom ...

*Submitted by Len DeAngelis of Middletown High School in Middletown, Rhode Island.*

*Standard: All students will demonstrate the power and effectiveness of voice through the language arts.*

Voice is a word high school students see as a comment on papers, but they rarely understand what it means or know how to improve that aspect of their writing. To focus on the term, I use several techniques over a period of days and thereafter continue to access our work as the need arises.

At first, I work on the technical aspects of voice; the example I used is the appeal of active versus passive voice sentences. "I hit you" versus "You were hit by me." Then we play, and make up five silly sentences in the passive voice. For example: *The fingernail sandwich was eaten by the principal.* Students then rewrite the passive voice sentences in the active voice.

The first assignment is to bring in five active and five passive voice sentences from printed sources, such as magazines, newspapers or texts. We try to define voice. We rewrite sentences in the opposing voice in class.

Then we listen to each other's voices and try to use words that precisely distinguish one voice from another. My purpose is to give students a sense of the varieties of voices around them. This eventually leads to the Whitman 'multitude' of voices each student possesses. Again, we try to define voice and its relation to style.

We continue with three to four passages from favorite books: Bo Brewster, the narrator of Chris Crutcher's *Ironman*, writes to Larry King:

*"At 4:30 each morning I awaken to your voice. I lie transfixed until five - when I haul my aching body out of the sack for another in a series of infinite workouts - what I like about you is, you listen."*

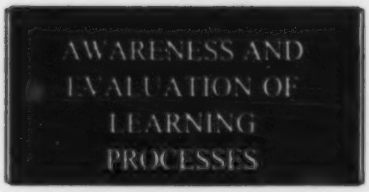
We use many sources to explore the concept of voice, and students enjoy a field trip to the library to find a resource of their own. We then analyze the writer's voice in writing versus the oral voice. The opportunity for a series of workshops and activities on voice tempts me. I use 'voice vignettes' as a spice -- added to my lessons to enhance the flavor, not served as a main course. I've used:

*Write an explanation of the scientific method by Huck Finn.*
*How would Shakespeare write about food in the school cafe?*

The possibilities are only limited by our creativity.

Finally, we write a paragraph based on pictures (one of a place, two to three of people) they have brought in from magazines. Who are the people? Where are they? What brought them together? Establish a conflict to resolve. Write the story for a first grader, for a friend, as the basis for a soap opera, as a sermon, for a senior citizen. Students like to read these in class -- many have a flair for the dramatic aspect of their beings. Then we play with the term voice again and attempt to understand its many manifestations.

Assessment occurs at various points throughout these activities. Students learn to reflect on their own work and grow to understand and appreciate their own and others' voices.




**Standard 5. AWARENESS AND EVALUATION OF LEARNING PROCESSES - All students will know the processes used to construct and convey meaning through text. They will develop and apply criteria for the evaluation and appreciation of their own and others' text.**

*Students will understand how they gain meaning from text, how they create text to communicate meaning, and how their previous knowledge and experiences affect text. Students will be able to judge the worth of what they read, write, speak, hear, and represent.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will monitor and explain the processes and strategies which help them construct and convey meaning.** | Identify strategies used to construct and convey meaning. | Explain and use the strategies to construct and convey meaning. |
| **Students will develop and apply standards for the evaluation of their own, peers', and others' text.** | Collaboratively discuss and develop standards for evaluating text. | Collaboratively discuss and develop standards based on exemplary works from classroom authors and apply to text. |
| **Students will develop and apply criteria for the appreciation of text.** | Express what they like about their own and others' text. | Make choices involving text based on aesthetic qualities and articulate a rationale. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Explain and use appropriate strategies that increase in sophistication when constructing and conveying meaning. | Explain and use appropriate strategies that increase in sophistication when constructing and conveying meaning, including strategies that deal with technology and the workplace. |
| Develop and apply standards for a variety of communicative purposes and apply them to text. | Develop and apply standards for a variety of purposes, and apply them to text, including standards that relate to research, technology and the workplace. |
| Develop criteria based on aesthetic qualities and use in evaluating reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. | Develop criteria based on aesthetic qualities and use in evaluating reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. |

# From the classroom ...

*Submitted by Gerardine Cannon of Jenks Junior High School in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.*

*Standard: All students will know the processes used to construct and convey meaning through text. They will develop and apply criteria for the evaluation and appreciation of their own and others' text.*

As part of a unit on courage, each student in my 8th grade language arts class is required to read a biography of a courageous historical figure. Students keep a daily double-entry journal to record both factual information and their own thoughts and feelings about the material they are reading. The left side of the page is for facts, dates, and answers to assigned questions, and the right side is for comments, opinion, thoughts, ideas and students' own questions. After entering material in their journals, students take time to complete the Awareness Focus Guide (Figure 1).

I developed an Awareness Focus Guide to highlight and strengthen metacognitive skills, essential elements of all academic success. Metacognition is an awareness of how one thinks about thinking. It is understanding one's thinking processes. By incorporating metacognitive skills with cognitive skills, my students learn to think on a broader, deeper plane while becoming more aware of their own learning processes. In my class, I help students with the following skills:

- Being aware of the difference between understanding and memorizing material.
- Knowing which mental strategies to use for understanding and which to use for memorizing.
- Recognizing which parts of a text are difficult.
- Knowing when one doesn't understand and then asking an expert for help.
- Knowing how to self-question and self-test.

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I developed the following chart to help student recognize their thinking skills. As they explain their use of each skill, they will develop an awareness of their own subconscious thinking skills, thus strengthening their own metacognition.

Figure 1.

**Awareness Focus Guide**

*Take five minutes at the end of each class period this week to check any of the following strategies that you used.*

*In the space below each strategy, be sure to explain what you did, how you did it and why you did it in clear concise language.*

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ | 1. Asked teacher or classmate questions about sections not understood. |
| ☐ | 2. Quickly reviewed story in my mind. |
| ☐ | 3. Looked up word in dictionary or glossary. |
| ☐ | 4. Took notes. |
| ☐ | 5. Underlined important parts. |
| ☐ | 6. Wrote or repeated spelling or vocabulary words until memorized. |
| ☐ | 7. Summarized in writing. |
| ☐ | 8. Generated own questions or comments about reading selection. |
| ☐ | 9. Studied main points of text. |
| ☐ | 10. After reading a section, returned to the parts not understood. |

**Standard 6. INQUIRY AND TECHNOLOGY - All students will investigate issues and problems using a variety of current and emerging technologies in school and work settings.**

*Inquiry is vital to the learning process. Technology in this Information Age provides global access, linking students to the world. Using language arts to access, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and apply the myriad sources of information available through current and emerging technologies, students will investigate issues and solve problems in all aspects of their world. These technologies presently include computers and their expansive capabilities, telecommunications, audio-visual media and a variety of assistive technologies.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will identify and articulate problems and questions for inquiry.** | Individually and collaboratively use language arts to formulate questions and problems relating to various topics. | Individually and collaboratively use language arts to formulate and explore questions and problems relating to various topics. |
| **Students will identify and use resources and tools appropriate for their purpose.** | Identify information resources, choose appropriate tools with guidance, and employ them effectively. | Develop independence in selecting and using information resources. |
| **Students will organize information and synthesize it in a meaningful way.** | Combine and synthesize information from various sources with guidance. | Combine and synthesize information and justify the selection of sources. |
| **Students will draw conclusions and present findings in a manner which includes the appropriate use of technology.** | Draw conclusions and present findings with guidance. | Draw conclusions, present and apply findings. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Individually and collaboratively use language arts to formulate, explore, and analyze questions and problems relating to various topics. | Individually and collaboratively use language arts to formulate, explore, analyze, and evaluate questions and problems relating to various topics. |
| Judge appropriateness of various resources and information for inquiry into particular questions. | Identify, employ, develop, judge, and apply appropriate resources for personal, social, educational, occupational and civic purposes. |
| Combine information from appropriate sources; synthesize information with explanation and analysis. | Combine information from appropriate sources; synthesize information with explanation, analysis and evaluation. |
| Draw conclusions, present and apply findings to a wider context. | Draw conclusions, present and apply findings; generalize to a wider context with increased proficiency. |

# From the classroom ...

*Submitted by Jean deTarnowsky of Clayville Elementary School in Scituate, Rhode Island*

*Standard: All students will investigate issues and problems using a variety of current and emerging technologies in school and work settings.*

Inquiry has always been part of our school curriculum, but technology, particularly the computer, has allowed us to conduct investigations in more sophisticated ways.

Our recent inquiry efforts in grade five started with a tour of the area around the school to observe changes that had taken place over the winter.

As students were walking, a few commented that the ground seemed different along various parts of the path. It was hard in some places, soft in others, and different in color. I gathered the students together to talk about what everyone thought. Some of the questions I posed to the group were:

*Was it really soil?*
*How was it different?*
*Why was it different?*
*Why is it important for us to understand different types of soil?*

We decided to collect a sample of soil from each area of the school grounds. We collected six samples.

Returning to the classroom, we brainstormed a list of resources for finding information about soil. Suggestions included encyclopedias, CD-ROMs, the WorldWide Web, our school library media specialist, garden centers and nurseries, the newspaper, and books about gardening. We decided to give ourselves a week to collect and read information.

The next step was to determine how to record the information about the soil samples. The students decided that a chart form would be best. We labeled each sample with a number indicating where we had found it and then recorded some initial observations using a database program in our computer. We also listed what we could observe about each sample on a large classroom chart.

The class was already divided into groups, so each group chose a number of resources that they would check. I decided to borrow a soil testing kit from the high school in order to gain additional data about the soil. During the following week we began testing the soil and recording the results on our computer database.

Once the data is recorded, the students determine if the soil was different in different locations. They develop hypotheses as to why it was different and what implications that information has for our everyday lives.

Using many sources of information, such as reference books, nature and science books, and local experts together with CD-ROMs and the WorldWide Web, we got answers to many of our questions. We presented our findings to the other fourth and fifth grade classes.

In the future we hope to contact other schools across the country and the world using a Listserve that is designed for school to school communication. We would like to exchange information with them about soil samples, and be able to demonstrate the use of a hypercard program for storing and presenting the information collected.

**Standard 7. ENDURING THEMES - All students will use themes and topics from text to make connections and demonstrate an understanding of commonalities and diversity through exploration of universal issues.**

*Themes (such as friendship, quest, power) link cultures across time and place. Students will develop understandings of enduring themes as they make connections and understandings of themselves in relation to text from different time periods and cultural groups.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will relate prior knowledge and experience to universal themes.** | Make connections between personal experiences and text. | Identify the connection between personal experience and universal themes in text. |
| **Students will demonstrate an understanding of universal themes across content areas and how they relate to historical and cultural context.** | Connect a wide range of experiences through text. | Explore a wide range of experiences that relate to themselves and others through text. |
| **Students will demonstrate an understanding of recurring problems and enduring issues in various content areas and contexts.** | Recognize patterns of enduring issues and recurring problems found in all cultures. | Classify and categorize patterns of enduring issues and recurring problems. |

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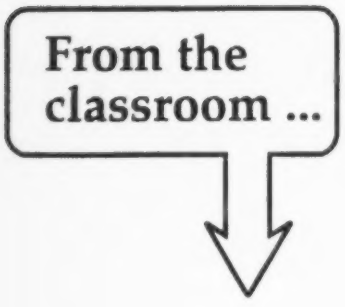
| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Synthesize and analyze new information and relate it to universal themes. | Connect personal experiences, school knowledge, and universal themes by recognizing the relevance to daily life. |
| Understand that themes in all content areas can explore and express the human condition. | Understand how themes are shaped by and transcend historical and cultural contexts. |
| Compare and contrast patterns of enduring issues and recurring problems. | Evaluate patterns of enduring issues and recurring problems. |




*Submitted by Helen Litterst of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf in Providence, Rhode Island.*

*Standard: All students will use themes and topics from text to make connections and demonstrate an understanding of commonalities and diversity through exploration of universal issues.*

Children attending the Rhode Island School for the Deaf learn through a spiraling, integrated (interdisciplinary) unit approach from preschool through middle school. A thematic, literature-based literacy component is an essential part of this curriculum. By the end of middle school. students have acquired a large repertoire of enduring themes (such as friendship, growing up and quests), motifs (such as trickster and *por quoi* stories), and genre (such as adventure, mystery, and historical fiction). Students learn to use these themes to make connections and see patterns (i.e. similar character types and story structures) across stories, understand and relate these enduring themes to their own lives and to what they are learning in their integrated (social studies, math/science, literature) units.

One kindergarten example of this interdisciplinary thematic approach is the use of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* and William Steig's *Amos and Boris* to explore the enduring themes of 'friendship' and 'friends help each other.'

Kindergarten teachers Mrs. Marilyn Cooney, Ms. Meme Meadows, Mrs. Zenaida Souza and Mrs. Judi Tartaglia first created illustrated, faithful retellings of both stories as 'big books' to be used throughout each unit. Then the traditional kindergarten 'farm' unit was explored through Charlotte's and Wilbur's friendship and adventures on Fern's farm. In addition to visits to local farms and apple orchards, the teachers created a farm environment within

the classroom (including bales of hay and nearly life-sized cardboard farm animals) with the children's help.

After shared reading of each chapter, the children role played the story, reenacting the situation in which one friend helps the other friend and usually engaged in a creative activity such as making webs for Charlotte's children. By the end of the story, the children had learned enough farm-related vocabulary and concepts to create and stage a country fair similar to the one described in the story for all the other lower school classes to attend. Preparation for this fair included cooking activities, making games, and making crafts to sell.

Following the farm unit, the friendship theme was continued in an 'ocean' unit. The story of Amos the mouse and his friend, Boris the whale (*Amos and Boris)* provided a wonderful background for exploring the ocean environment and the multitude of topics related to oceans, including whale behavior, other sea life, boat building, survival at sea, basic navigation by the stars, and the use of tools such as a compass and a telescope - all part of William Steig's story.

Again the kindergarten classes made visits to several local ocean sites, created Boris' ocean home and used it in their dramatizing of the story and other unit related activities. Of course, in addition to these two main stories, the teachers read additional theme- and unit-related stories to the children which were used to help them make connections, see related patterns, and discuss how this enduring theme of friendship - so essential to people of all ages - directly impacted on their lives in school and at home.

| Related Literature (Farm) | Related Literature (Ocean) |
|---|---|
| The Wonderful Pigs of Jillian Jigs | Herman the Helper |
| Ask Mr. Bear | A House for a Hermit Crab |
| Little Red Hen | Nathan's Fishing Trip |
| The Very Busy Spider | Rainbow Fish |
| Charlie Needs a Cloak | Swimmy |
| Small Pig | The Little Polar Bear |
| Anansi the Spider | |
| Perfect the Pig | |
| Who Took the Farmer's Hat | |

**Standard 8. LITERACY AND THE COMMUNITY - All students will develop and apply their language skills using the community as a learning laboratory.**

*Students must develop and use the language arts beyond the school setting to recognize their relevance to daily life. Through interaction with civic organizations, social organizations, and business and industry, students will apply language arts skills effectively.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will identify and explore school, community and workplace resources and their issues.** | Observe, select, access and record meaningful data from community sources. | Access, record, apply, evaluate and integrate meaningful community-based data into a written document or presentation. |
| **Students will develop skills and knowledge in addressing school, community and work issues.** | Learn about the community, its needs and problems. Participate in cooperative research related to these concerns. Present a demonstration of findings. | Learn about the community, its needs and problems. Carry out small group and independent research activities using both primary (community based) and secondary sources; present and apply a demonstration of findings. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Access, record, apply, evaluate and integrate meaningful community-based data into a written document or presentation. Explicitly apply data to the community and/or workplace. | Access, record, apply, evaluate and integrate meaningful community-based data into a written document or presentation. Explicitly apply data to the community and/or workplace as it reflects their personal goals and interests. |
| Research the needs and problems of the community. Synthesize information from primary (community based) and secondary sources; demonstrate and apply findings. | Carry out group and independent research, participate in and act on issues of public policy affecting the workplace and the community and its citizenry. |

# From the classroom ...

*Submitted by Carol B. Avila, Marie D'Attelo and Margot Alfano of the Main Street School in Warren, Rhode Island*

*Standard: All students will develop and apply their language skills using the community as a learning laboratory.*

The first-graders were studying plants, and we received a grant from the National Garden Association for 250 spring bulbs. The students thought it would be a good idea to plant them at the Town Hall in Warren.

I reminded the students we would need permission from the town. For homework, they were asked to find out who the 'boss' of Warren was. When we discovered the Town Council was in charge, we worked with two other first grade classrooms and wrote a letter asking for permission.

The Town Council put us on their agenda, and the first graders attended the meeting. They elected one student to speak for the group. The Council decided the first graders could plant their bulbs at the Town Hall if they drew up a plan and got it approved by the Town Planning Board.

We needed a measure of the Town Hall to draw up our plans. We walked to the Town Hall, carrying our 'measures' - a cardboard tube, a red plastic chair, a milk crate, etc. We measured and recorded our data and went back to construct a model of the Town Hall yard in our hallway. It was good to find that '8 Katies' was the same as '26 Derek Jackets' and '21 red chairs'. On a giant roll of light blue paper, the children distributed bottle cap 'bulbs' and then colored, painted and decorated their plans for the Planning Board.

The Planning Board was as wonderful as our Council had

been. On the night the children presented their blueprints, the adults kept straight faces (the first graders do not do 'scale' so the blueprints stretched from one chamber to the next!). Never had they been presented with so many happy faced flowers, laughing fat caterpillars and smiling suns! They gave the children unanimous approval and gave our blueprint an official seal.

For the actual planting, we worked in cooperative groups. Each group had a supervisor, a measurer, a digger and a bulb planter. The jobs rotated through the group until all had a turn at each job. There were plenty of parents to help coach the children through their tasks.

We wrote many thank you notes, read lots of great literature (*The Tiny Seed, The Enormous Watermelon, The Little Red Hen, Jack and the Beanstalk*) and held many serious discussions.

There were many opportunities for assessment here. Assessment: Reading and writing skills, progress in acquiring the alphabetic principle and print knowledge recorded from students reading and writing were all used to gauge student development.

And all I had in my plan book was "demonstrate plants from bulbs"!

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At the Council meeting, from the left, Mark Johnson PJB, Mr. Rupp of *Warren Times*, Mrs Charlson, Courtney Carpenter, Lauren Zito, Sarah McPhillips, John Kemp, and Mr. Kemp.

**Standard 9. LANGUAGE ARTS AND CITIZENSHIP - All students will use language effectively and responsibly as members of a democratic society.**

*Language can be used to inform and persuade and thereby bring about dramatic changes in a democratic, multicultural society. Students will apply and understand language skillfully, effectively and responsibly.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grade K-4)* | *Level 2 (Grade 5-8)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will use a variety of language arts skills to become more aware of themselves as community members.** | Identify and explore school and community issues and problems. | Research how individuals in their local community use language arts to impact the lives of people in their community, nation and world. |
| **Students will make informed decisions from multiple perspectives.** | Observe situations, predict possible outcomes, and explain the consequences. | Synthesize information about a situation gained from observation and/or text, create new insight, discuss issues of responsibility, and experiment with ways to inform others. |
| **Students will use language appropriate to purpose, message and audience.** | Observe language arts in use and identify/discuss its impact relative to the intended audience. | Construct, evaluate and revise language in view of its intent and possible impact, with guidance. |

| *Level 3 (Grade 9-10)* | *Level 4 (Grade 11-12)* |
|---|---|
| Identify and research issues of importance that confront young adults, their community, nation and world. | Analyze the persuasive power of language and how it can become an instrument of change in their community, nation and world. |
| Use language to explore responsible ways to address local, state, national and global concerns. | Use language responsibly to inform others about local, state, national and global concerns. |
| Construct, evaluate and revise language in view of its intent and possible impact, with guidance. | Recognize the relationship between the individual and society in the application of effective and responsible language. |

# 4.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the name given to the formal practice of monitoring student progress relative to established standards. Its purposes are many: to provide feedback to students and parents, to inform and assist teaches in making instructional decisions, to demonstrate accountability to the community and state.

This document provides a framework for setting challenging and measurable achievement standards in the English language arts. It is the expectation that all students will meet these standards. To assist in the realization of that goal, assessment and accountability measures which reflect and support these standards will be established.

Assessment in the English language arts will take a variety of forms, including performances, demonstrations, and samples of student work, as well as traditional, norm-referenced tests. All these formats will be part of a coherent and integrated system.

Professional development programs and collaborative relationships will be established to help educators align assessments and instruction in the English language arts, as well as to aid school improvement generally.

These new assessments will support parents, teachers, and schools in helping all students to acquire the English language arts skills needed to succeed and prosper in the next century.

Assessment has changed dramatically within the last several years. The practices associated with assessment have broadened the view and reflection of most educators.

The emphasis on goals such as problem-solving, decision-making, creative thinking, collaboration and metacognition have changed the way we must assess students' work. There is a growing need for application of these goals to real world problems, and to that end, the requirements for students must reflect daily world applications.

The Rhode Island Statewide Assessment Plan

*The Rhode Island Statewide Assessment Plan* (RISAP,1995 - 2000), will serve three purposes:

1) to inform and improve instruction,

2) to measure school achievement for accountability purposes, and

3) to assess student performance for parent and teacher information.

RISAP states that the assessment will be increasingly performance-based and will be phased in over several years. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 will be included in RISAP.

*Annually, students will be assessed in language arts, mathematics, science and health. Assessment results will be reported to the student, school, district and state. Reporting will indicate the percentage of students meeting performance standards. Virtually all students in Rhode Island public schools will be included in the assessment and reporting.*

Annually, students will be assessed in language arts, mathematics, science and health. Assessment results will be reported to the student, school, district and state. Reporting will indicate the percentage of students meeting performance standards. Virtually all students in Rhode Island public schools will be included in the assessment and reporting.

Six principles guided the development of the Statewide Assessment Plan.

Principle 1: Assessments should occur in a variety of formats all of which should be part of a coherent and integrated system.

Principle 2: Assessments and accountability will be driven by formal learning goals and will be reflective of the curricula and content area standards designed to support these learning goals.

Principle 3: Challenging and measurable student performance standards will be set, and it will be the expectation that all students will be prepared to meet the standards.

Principle 4: Assessments will be of high quality, unbiased and with adaptations to allow vcalid assessments of all populations.

Principle 5: Performance will be reported publicly for targeted groups of students, and schools will be assisted in using data to define and assess schoool improvement plans.

Principle 6: Collaborative relationships will be established and maintained to support the professional development of educators in terms of school improvement, and assessments with instruction.

The English Language Arts Standards and Assessment

In keeping with all of the principles of the Statewide Assesment Plan, the English Language Arts Standards state what students should know and be able to do at various levels in their formal public school education. Thus, Principle 2, which states "Assessments and accountability will be driven by formal learning goals and will be reflective of curricula and content area standards," applies to the standards. In practice, student achievement of the English language arts standards will be measured by the RI Statewide Assessment Plan.

Further, the assessments will measure whether the intended knowledge and skills have been learned; the results will facilitate effective instruction. For all of the students in Rhode Island, the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills has never been stronger. With standards and assessments closely aligned, learning goals will become increasingly clear; students will develop reflective practices, and teachers will include a broad variety of instructional strategies.

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In its implementation, the assessment model includes performance exercises, portfolios and normed instruments. The statewide writing assessment, currently in place for grades 4, 8, and 10, has had a strong impact on writing instruction in this state. Teachers have been the leaders in designing the prompts and the rubric for ten years; clearly, the writing assessment supports the English Language Arts Framework. Furthermore, the writing assessment continues to be not only a powerful instrument for professional development, but also an invaluable resource for teachers to re-examine their instructional strategies for writing. Individual schools, teachers, and school districts have implemented research-based writing process activities, including portfolios.

Currently, statewide assessment in the English language arts consists of:

A writing performance assessment, administered each spring to students in grades 4, 8 and 10; and

The reading subtest of the MAT-7 (a 'standardized' test) administered each spring to the same students.

Within the next two years, the state plans to develop a reading performance assessment. Initially this will be administered to 4th graders as a pilot.

The English Language Arts Standards include a broad spectrum of opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and can do. Assessment practice must mirror the learning process rather than be an unrelated test. Through "embedded" assessment, that is, the use of assessment within the learning situation, a student can naturally demonstrate knowledge and skill. The standards in English Language Arts support this kind of development with real on-going tasks for students to accomplish.

The English Language Arts Framework and the Statewide Assessment Plan tightly link the educational goals for the students of Rhode Island. It is critical, therefore, that assessment tasks be constantly re-examined and evaluated in light of the most current research and best practice. Furthermore, articulation among all of the stakeholders in standards implementation and assessment programs is key to the success of students.

# 5.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Why provide professional development?

The kinds of teaching and learning that are reflected in this framework may be different from what most adults have experienced in their own schooling. As the world around us is rapidly changing, the way we educate our children and prepare them for life after school must also change.

We have access to more research in the field of education than ever before. It is essential that teachers become engaged in on-going professional development that will assist them in the growth of their teaching practices. It is vital that teachers design and participate in professional development that meets their needs and helps them to achieve excellence.

Rhode Island has developed Standards for Professional Development that describe professional development as a system of continuous growth and learning that builds the capacity of a school community to respond to the needs of all learners. The goal of professional development is to improve students' learning by enhancing the knowledge and skills of everyone who affect it. This suggests participation by all members of the school community - teachers, school administrators, family members, higher education faculty, local businesses, and community members.

These stakeholders must continuously engage in their own professional development and collaborate with other groups to promote systemic change in which each school focuses on how to educate its students to meet the demands of the future. Since the education of our children is the responsibility of everyone within the learning community, professional development opportunities need to be fostered in risk-free environments that clearly focus on common goals.

Although most people acknowledge change in their own lives, educational systems change slowly. As a result, the exponential growth in technology that permeates the workplace and home has not resulted in major changes in schools. In order to prepare students for an ever changing future, schools must develop and model the capacity to deal with constant change.

A major vehicle for affecting change in the educational environment is professional development. Properly designed professional development creates the opportunity to acknowledge and analyze existing changes, to understand the nature and implications of those changes, and to design educational systems that will address the never ending world of change. Professional development helps teachers, families, administrators, communities, business members and others to reach a better understanding of the learning process. This understanding enables professionals and communities to help students achieve to the best of their abilities.

**What is quality professional development?**

The four principles of good teaching identified in the Rhode Island Standards for Professional Development are the *culture, planning, design* and *evaluation* of professional development. These serve as the qualifiers of quality professional development.

*The four principles of good teaching identified in the Rhode Island Standards for Professional Development are the culture, planning, design and evaluation of professional development. These serve as the qualifiers of quality professional development.*

*Culture,* which refers to the conditions that support individual and organizational growth and development, sets the atmosphere for success. The attitudes, beliefs and values of people within the learning community are critical in the designing, building and sustaining of professional development. It is imperative that the school culture acknowledge and respond to the diversity of its participants when building a supportive community that will focus on student achievement.

*Planning,* which refers to what and how decisions are made in preparing professional development programs, gives participants opportunities for partaking in the decisions that will affect them. This planning process needs to be consistent with larger systemic and school improvement efforts, for as we have seen from experience, isolated efforts do not create the systemic changes that are needed to bring about excellence in our educational system.

*Design,* which refers to the content of professional development programming, how it is organized, and how it is delivered, reflects what is already known about adult learning and diverse learning styles. There are many different models of professional development with no one model being appropriate for all learners. If the offerings are cognizant of this fact, then meaningful professional development is more likely. Research has shown that one-day workshops do not effect long-term

changes in people's behavior or what they do in the classroom. For professional development to have lasting impact, it needs to be on-going and supportive. Some of the most meaningful professional development takes place on the job, with colleagues sharing ideas, visiting classrooms, and engaging in action research, or participating in study groups. Quality professional development occurs within an atmosphere that encourages people to experiment, permits mistakes, and fosters growth through learning. With this in mind, learning communities are challenged to design comprehensive professional development plans that reflect the school philosophy and culture. Since any design plan will have an effect on aspects of the school day and calendar, systems will require redesigning to accomplish the goals set by the learning community.

*Evaluation*, which refers to the determination of program effectiveness, incorporates opportunities for periodic input by the participants. Since the ultimate goal of professional development is to effect changes in students' achievement, attitudes, and skills, it is imperative that the effectiveness of the professional development programs are continuously evaluated.

## EVALUATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

# 6.

The English Language Arts standards describe what it means to use language skillfully for informational, vocational, aesthetic, literary, critical, and social purposes. Program evaluation allows practitioners to gain new insights and to solve problems creatively.

In addition to evaluating students, it is important to evaluate the program that delivers this instruction to those students. To this end, evaluation of the English language arts program must consider several major questions:

1. Do all students have frequent opportunities to read, write, listen, speak and view?

2. What opportunities, texts, technologies and other experiences can be provided to assure that students will be able to make effective and skillful use of language?

3. Are students continually challenged to move from one level of achievement to the next?

4. Do students and parents understand the standards of performance expected of students in the English language arts?

5. To what extent is there parent and community involvement in English language arts program activities, such as reading programs, language/book fairs, speech contests, drama festivals, and in providing financial and technological support?

6. To what extent are graduates successful in securing and maintaining employment, or in a post-secondary setting?

Evaluation of the program should be both quantitative and qualitative. Additionally, the rapidly increasing use of case studies of both teachers and students has become a widely accepted means to examine strengths and challenges of programs. Evaluation procedures must be numerous and multi-faceted; equitable and timely.

In 1989, The English Coalition Conference, a major meeting for the kindergarten through college community in English Language Arts, established guiding principles. Embracing those principles, evaluation of the English language arts programs must address the following statement from that pivotal conference:

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*"Unless students know how to read and write, they will not be able to assimilate, evaluate, and control the immense amount of knowledge and the large number of messages produced every day. The develoment of new media similarly requires of citizens an enhanced ability to use different ways of reading and writing, and language arts instruction has an important role to play here."*

Literacy is a priority and an interactive classroom provides the best environment for achieving this goal. Indeed, the Rhode Island English Language Arts framework calls for implementation of those goals established at the conference; subsequent program evaluation must ask the appropriate questions to ascertain if the goals are being met.

Pilot programs can begin the evaluation and analysis; support and technical assistance will be necessary to implement the progam evaluation. A successful program will have students demonstrating communications skills and knowledge necessary for citizens in a democratic society. Skill in oral and written form and listening and viewing with comprehension is the major aim of language arts education. The Rhode Island English Language Arts Frameworks establish those guidlelines for districts; evaluation of the programs through appropriate assessment technologies within schools, districts and the state will determine changes and next steps in educating the children and young adults to prepare for their world beyond public school as literate citizens.

## Glossary

***We have attempted to eliminate any 'educational jargon' from this document. However, the use of certain terms is sometimes necessary for clarity both in this document and in related publications. Definitions included in this glossary have been drawn from many sources, including the Office of Assessment at the RI Department of Education and the 'Standards for the English Language' published jointly by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.***

**Accountability**: The school, district, and state responsibility to ensure the academic success of all students. It is used in conjunction with indicators which measure school and student progress towards learning goals, high graduation rates, etc., and includes the on-going reporting of progress.

**All Kids (or All Students)**: Every child and young person can and must learn.

**Alternative Assessments**: Techniques that have not traditionally been used to assess student knowledge and understanding. May also refer to techniques used by districts to assess the achievement of a small number of students for whom state assessments are not appropriate.

**Assessment:** A wide range of techniques such as performances, questionnaires, observations, tests, etc. used to measure and understand student accomplishments. These processes may be used to judge the quality and range of student achievement, and they may also provide feedback for improving instructional practice and educational program design.

**Audience:** The collection of intended readers, listeners, or viewers for a particular work or performance.

**Authentic Assessment**: Tasks that show performance and require students to generate rather than choose a response; used as an alternative to conventional multiple-choice and true-false tests.. Assessment should mirror and measure how well students use knowledge, skills and competencies to solve real-world tasks and problems. Examples include exhibitions, performances, written or oral responses, journals and portfolios.

**Common Core**: Statements of the knowledge, skills and competencies that all learners should attain. Broad foundation statements that embody what learners should know and be able to do to meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.

**Community Involvement**: All members of the community combining their efforts to build family-school-community partnerships that improve schools and performance for all children.

**Content standards**: Definitions of what students should know and be able to do. They describe the knowledge, skills, and understandings students should have in particular subject areas in order to attain high levels of competency. Content standards provide guidelines for what schools should teach to ensure that all students are prepared to live and work in the 21st century.

**Convention**: an accepted practice in a spoken or written language. The conventions of grammar include the rules of speaking and writing.

**Criteria:** Descriptions of the important features of a learning goal, content standard or opportunity-to-learn standard that can be used to judge what students know and are able to do; for example, with regard to student work, the most important aspects of a product or performance criteria provide a basis for evaluating student work.

**Curriculum Framework:** A guide for districts, schools, institutions of higher education, teachers, administrators, and state officials to use in planning, supporting, implementing and evaluating programs. It identifies the important concepts, principles, and content for a respective subject matter area and also provides suggestions about how this subject matter can best be taught in light of research and professional craft knowledge. It is not a detailed curriculum, i.e., it does not answer the question, *"What do I do with my students on Monday?"* Schools and teachers may use a wide array of curriculum materials, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques to enable students to gain the understandings, insights, and skills that the framework discusses.

**Family Involvement**: Family involvement in schools is related along four dimensions that include advocacy, education, shared decision-making, and support. These fundamental relationships between families and schools plan an essential role in student success.

**Full Participation**: The expectation of accountability for all students. One way to be accountable is to hold all students to the same standards, as measured by state assessments.

**Genre**: A category used to classify literary and other works, usually by form, technique or content.

**Language diversity**: Variety in both national languages and within national languages.

**Learning Community**: A community that results when all (teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community partners) in the school community are lifelong learners, learning individually and together.

**Lifelong Learner**: A disposition and ability to change in response to new demands or information one encounters throughout life. This concept is based on the understanding that schools cannot provide students with all they need to learn. Rather, schools must prepare students for continuous learning.

**Literacy**: Literacy, in its traditional definition, is the ability to read and write in a designated language, as well as a mindset or way of thinking about the use of reading and writing in everyday life. Literacy now includes the capacity to accomplish a broad base of understandings and uses of reading, writing, speaking, multimedia and other language capabilities.

**Media**: The various physical means through which information may be communicated, for example, newspapers, films, books, computer software, painting.

**Performance Assessments**: Processes whereby students use knowledge, skills and competencies to construct responses to problems. Responses are rated according to pre-established scoring rubrics related to the standards the performance is measuring.

**Performance Standards**: Multiple proficiency thresholds for all students including "advanced" levels of performance to recognize superior learning. These thresholds reflect an agreed upon level of acceptable accomplishment for an area of student learning, and exemplified by a benchmark set of student work; for example, a benchmark of student work might be a collection of student writing which typifies acceptable writing abilities at a particular level. Student work is collected through performance assessments. Standards are characterized by high expectations of what is acceptable for all learners.

**Portfolio**: Representative and judicious collection of a student's work and might include a student's "best" piece, a work in progress or a common activity repeated at several point throughout the year to show improvement over time. A portfolio should include evidence that the student has engaged in self-assessment and reflection. As an evaluation, portfolios provide direct evidence of the student's progress toward achieving student learning goals.

**Prior knowledge**: Knowledge that stems from previous experience.

**Professional Development**: A system of continuous growth and learning which builds the capacity of a school community to respond to the needs of all learners.

**Rubric**: A set of guidelines used to assign score points, or scores, to student work by providing descriptions and criteria for different levels of performance. A rubric for score points from 0 to 4, for example, would include various levels of the major criteria or dimensions to be achieved.

**Standard Setting**: The process of setting performance standards should be public and broad-based so that all sectors of the community understand what is an acceptable level of accomplishment for each student learning goal. These accomplishments are described by scoring criteria and exemplified by benchmarks. The standards will be set at multiple points in the educational process, for example, at grades 4, 8 and 10.

**Student Learning Goals**: Broad statements that define what students should know and be able to do as they progress through a school system. These learning goals are future-oriented, publicly defined, and learner-centered, and are characterized by high expectations for all learners. For example, one goal may be that students will write effectively in standard English; a performance standard would then be established to define the acceptable level of 'effective' writing.

**Text**: The term *text* broadly refers to printed communications in their varied forms; oral communications, including conversations and speeches; and visual communications such as film, computer and video displays. Text, in today's world, includes traditional and contemporary poems, plays, stories, letters, essays, interviews, books, magazines, newspapers, visual media, and technical materials.

**Writing Processes**: The various aspects of the recursive act of creating a written piece, including planning( in a variety of ways), drafting or composing, revising, editing, and publishing.

Professional Resources

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1250 North Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1403

Educational Development (EDC)
55 Chapel Street
W. Newton, Massachusetts

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, Delaware 19714-8139

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 W. Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096
(800) 369-6283

National Writing Project
5627 Tolman Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

New England Association of Teachers of English
P.O.Box 234
Lexington, MA 02173

New Standards Project
National Center on Education and the Economy
700 11th Street, N.W., Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 783-3668

Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement
for the Northeast and Islands
144 Wayland Avenue
Providence, RI 02906
274-9548

Rhode Island Consortium on Writing
(National Writing Project Affiliate)
English Department
Rhode Island College
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
456-8674

Rhode Island Council of Teachers of English
c/o Anne Arvidson, President
Exeter-West Greenwich High School
930 Nooseneck Hill Road
West Greenwich, RI 02817
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Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
277-4600

Rhode Island Educational Media Association
c/o Michael Mello
P.O. Box 762
Portsmouth, RI 02871

Rhode Island State Council of IRA
4 Gardner Avenue
No. Providence, RI 02911

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-0774

Annotated References

**Professionals who worked on this framework have agreed to share their best resources, along with their comments:**

JOURNALS:

The English Journal published by NCTE.

Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy (formerly the *Journal of Reading*) published by IRA.
*Connects adolescents and reading at the middle level. What goals will best support middle school students in the development of reading and learning from text.*

Language Arts published by NCTE.

Primary Voices published by NCTE.

The Reading Teacher published by IRA.
*Articles cover a wide range of literacy topics for all ages. The articles offer a balance of theory and practice.*

Voices from the Middle published by NCTE.

BOOKS:

Allen, Janet. It's Never Too Late - Leading Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy. Heinemann. 1995.
*A research chronicle offering not only proven methods but inspiration.*

Applebee, Arthur N. Literature in the Secondary School - Studies of Curriculum and Instruction in the United States. NCTE. 1993.

Applebee, Arthur N., Judith A. Langer and Ina V.S. Mullins. Learning To Be Literate in America: Reading, Writing and Reasoning. National Assessment of Educational Progress. 1987.
*A scholarly appraisal of the literature curriculum at the middle and secondary levels.*

Atwell, Nancy. In the Middle: Reading, Writing and Learning with Adolescents. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. 1987.
*Important book in any professional library, used in writing/reading workshop. Through anecdotes and narrative, Atwell presents both a theoretical perspective along with practical suggestions for helping adolescents become more effective communicators through reading and writing. This includes descriptions of classroom organization, direct teaching lessons, record keeping and assessment procedures.*

Atwell, Nancy. Side by Side - Essays on Teaching to Learn. Heinemann. 1991.
*The sequel to 'In the Middle' exploring conditions which make it possible for children and their teachers to become writers and readers.*

Belanoff, Pat and Marcia Dickson, eds. Portfolios - Process and Product. Boynton/Cook. 1991.
*Practical, theoretical and broad book focusing exclusively on portfolio assessment.*

Boynton, Robert W. and Maynard Mack. Introduction to the Poem. Boynton/Cook. 1985.
*Helps clarify what a poem is and what id does, and how a good reader reenacts the experience it offers.*

Boynton, Robert W. and Maynard Mack. Introduction to the Short Story. Boynton/Cook. 1992.
*How readers of short stories can and do approach reading.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Brooke, R., R. Mirtz and R. Evans. Small Groups In Writing Workshops: Invitations to a Writer's Life. NCTE. 1994.

Butler, Andrea and Jan Turbill. Towards a Reading-Writing Classroom. Heinemann. 1984.
*Practical text supporting integrated phonics teaching and learning.*

Calkins, Lucy McCormick and Shelly Harwayne. Living Between the Lines. New Hampshire: Heinemann. 1991.
*Especially appropriate for grade 3 and up.*

Christenbury, Leila, ed. Books for You - An Annotated Booklist for Senior High Students. NCTE. 1995

Clay, Marie M. Becoming Literate - The Construction of Inner Control. Heinemann. 1991.
*Practical text supporting integrated phonics teaching and learning.*

Cook, Lenora (Leni) and Helen C. Lodge, eds. Voices in English Classrooms - Honoring Diversity and Change. NCTE. 1995.
*A collection of essays exploring issues in the classroom, provides classroom practices and practical applications.*

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*Practical text supporting integrated phonics teaching and learning.*

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*Proposes a set of language outcomes based on the belief that language is purposeful, social and dynamic and that proficiency increases as one uses language to make meaning.*

Delpit, Lisa. Other People's Children. The New Press. 1995.

Duffy, Gerald G., ed. Reading in the Middle School. IRA. 1990.
*For past and present recommendations for middle school reading and actual classroom practices.*

Dyson, Anne Haas. Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write in an Urban Primary School. Teachers College Press. 1993.

Fletcher, Ralph. What A Writer Needs. Heinemann. 1993.
*An engaging discussion illustrated with examples.*

Flood, James, Julie Jensen, Diane Lapp and James R. Squire, eds. Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts. NY: MacMillan Publishing. 1991.
*A publication co-sponsored by NCTE and IRA, this bridges the work of researchers and practitioners.*

Fulwiler, Toby. Teaching with Writing - An Interdisciplinary Workshop Approach. Boynton/Cook. 1987.
*Developed to approximate the experience of an interdisciplinary writing workshop aimed at high school and college teachers.*

Fulwiler, Toby. The Journal Book. Boynton/Cook. 1987.
*Explores the uses of student journals, detailing implications and applications, theory and practice.*

Gardner, Howard. Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Basic Books. 1983.

Garrett, S.D., J. Frey, M. Wildasin, and R. Hobbs. Messages and Meaning: A Guide to Understanding Media. IRA. 1995.

Gere, A.R., ed. Roots in the Sawdust: Writing to Learn Across the Disciplines. NCTE. 1985.

Glazer, Susan Mandel and Carol Smulien Brown. Portfolios and Beyond: Collaborative Assessment in Reading and Writing. Gordon. 1993.
*Includes more than assessment because assessment ideas develop out of instruction which develops out of how/what readers and writers do. This also has implications for listening, speaking and viewing. Great 'forms' to use or modify.*

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Graves, Donald H. Writing - Teachers and Children at Work. Heinemann. 1983.
*The basic text in the movement that established writing as a central part of literacy education.*

Harris, Theodore L. and Richard E. Hodges, eds. The Literacy Dictionary - the Vocabulary of Reading and Writing. IRA. 1995.

Heath, Shirley Brice and Leslie Magnolia. Children of Promise - Literate Activity in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms. Joint Publication of National Education Association, Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, and American Educational Research Association. 1991.
*Examines how students, teachers and researchers listen, observe and learn from one another, and describes literacy practices and underlying principles of language and learning in three 'language minority' classrooms.*

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*Explains how any teacher can build a community of writers using portfolios.*

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*This is a resource for planning appropriate reading curricula for the development learning of early readers (K-3).*

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*Individual children speak for themselves.*

Hunter, Susan and Ray Wallace, eds. The Place of Grammar in Writing Instruction. Boynton/Cook. 1995.
*Teachers and researchers explore the role of grammar in the teaching of writing and describe ways that grammar instruction has been, is, and should be used in our writing programs.*

Hydrick, J. Parent's Guide to Literacy for the 21st Century. NCTE. 1996.

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*A joint effort to define standards for assessing literacy in ways that further learning.*

Johannessen, Larry R. Illuminating Rounds - Teaching the Literature of the Vietnam War. NCTE. 1992.
*Written by a teacher and Vietnam veteran, this book offers a variety of useful classroom practices, along with a rationale for intensive study of literature from this period.*

Kirby, Dan, Tom Liner and Ruth Vinz. Inside Out - Developmental Strategies for Teaching Writing. Boynton/Cook. 1988.
*A teacher text about helping junior and senior high school students learn to write.*

Langer, J.A. Envisioning Literature: Literary Understanding and Literature Instruction. Teachers College Press/IRA. 1995.

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*Responds to the overwhelming concerns non-ESL faculty have expressed.*

Lloyd-Jones, Richard and Andrea Lunsford, eds. The English Coalition Conference: Democracy Through Language. NCTE. 1987.

Macrorie, Ken. The I-Search Paper. Boynton/Cook. 1988.
*A textbook which treats students as partners in learning.*

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Macrorie, Ken. Telling Writing. Boynton/Cook. 1985.
*Enables students to write about and from their own experiences.*

McClure, Amy A. and Janice V. Kristo, eds. Inviting Children's Responses to Literature. NCTE. 1994.
*A practical collection of ideas intended to help teachers invite preschool through middle school readers to respond more thoughtfully to books.*

Moffett, James and Betty Jane Wagner. Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12. Boynton/Cook. 1991.
*A textbook for college methods courses and a resource book for curriculum supervisors, language arts and reading coordinators, and classroom teachers at all levels.*

Moffett, James. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boynton/Cook. 1983.
*A book that is widely read and cited, every teacher should read this (and re-read it).*

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Noguchi, R.R. Grammar and the Teaching of Writing: Limits and Possibilities. NCTE. 1991.

O'Keefe, Virginia. Speaking to Think/Thinking to Speak. Boynton/Cook. 1995.
*Offers a method of instruction that enables teachers to give every student a chance to succeed.*

Oliver, Eileen Iscoff. Crossing the Mainstream - Multicultural Perspectives in Teaching Literature. NCTE. 1994.
*Provides a rationale and practical resources for providing a more complete treatment of America's literature in high school and college classrooms.*

Purves, Alan C., ed. Encyclopedia of English Studies and Language Arts. Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic, Inc. 1994.
*Easy to use encyclopedia covering all aspects of the English language arts and its teaching.*

Rief, Linda. Seeking Diversity - Language Arts with Adolescents. Heinemann. 1992.
*A practical application and synthesis of the philosophies and ideas of Atwell, Romano, Graves, Murray, Calkins and the Goodmans*

Rigg, P. & V. Allen, eds. Why They Don't All Speak English: Integrating the ESL Student into the Regular Classroom. NCTE. 1989.

Rodby, Judith. Appropriating Literacy - Writing and Reading English as a Second Language. Boynton/Cook. 1992.
*Synthesis of insights from ESL, linguistics, composition, anthropology, literacy and literary criticism to discuss the meaning of ESL literacy. Theoretical and practical.*

Rosenblatt, Louise M. Literature as Exploration. NCTE. 1983.
*Describes social concepts that influence the study of literature and attempts to relate literature to what the student brings to it.*

Rosenblatt, Louise M. The Reader, the Text, the Poem. NCTE. 1994.

*This work provides a rounded theoretical basis for a balanced 'reader-response' approach.*

Routman, Regie. Literacy at the Crossroads. Heinemann. 1996.

Routman, Regie. Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12. New Hampshire: Heinemann. 1994.
*This book presents a balanced approach to developing essential skills and strategies within meaningful contexts. I find I keep going back to it when I need an idea for either an 'approach' or a check to see if I am balancing my language arts instruction. Useful for beginners and veterans.*

Samuels, Barbara G. and G. Kylene Beers, eds. Your Reading - An Annotated Booklist for Middle School and Junior High. NCTE. 1996.

Smagorinsky, Peter. Expressions - Multiple Intelligences in the English Class. NCTE. 1991.
*Presents evidence supporting four scales of intelligence that are not commonly assessed.*

Smith, Mary Ann and Miriam Ylvisaker, eds. Teachers' Voices - Portfolios in the Classroom. NCTE. 1993.
*Part of the National Writing Project series, this book talks about how teachers move student writing from piece-by-piece accumulation to a unique body of work.*

Tchudi, Stephen N. and Susan J. Tchudi. The English Language Arts Handbook - Classroom Strategies for Teachers. Boynton/Cook. 1991.
*A strong, integrated theory of language and language learning with many practical examples.*

Tsujimoto, Joseph I. Teaching Poetry Writing to Adolescents. NCTE. 1988.
*This book offers teaching designs that the author has created and used in the classroom.*

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*Practical text supporting integrated phonics teaching and learning.*

Wilde, Sandra. You Kan Red This! Spelling and Pronunciation for Whole Language Classrooms. Heinemann. 1992.
*Practical text supporting integrated phonics teaching and learning.*

Yancey, K.B., ed. Portfolios in the Writing Classroom: An Introduction. NCTE. 1992.

Young, Art and Toby Fulwiler, eds. When Writing Teachers Teach Literature. Boynton/Cook. 1995.
*The contributors, all practitioners, discuss how they teach literature and what it means to them.*

INTERNET RESOURCES:

http://www.ri.net/RIDE/ -- the RI Department of Education's home page, with access to many educational and other state activities and offices on line - including the frameworks.

http://www.yahoo.com/Education/K_12/Resources/ -- an excellent search page on the web, listing hundreds of sites on the internet where teachers, students and parents can 'visit'.

http://nickel.ucs.indiana.edu/~wolfgral/english.html -- a language and literacy site maintained by the University of Indiana, where there are literature resources (like on-line, hypertext novels), teaching resources, classroom activities, lesson plans, and opportunities to work with other classes across the world.

http://www.ncte.org -- site maintained by the National Council of Teachers of English with many resources for all levels.

# APPENDIX

## The Rhode Island Common Core of Learning Goals

# DEVELOPING A COMMON CORE OF LEARNING

## A Report On What We Heard

Revised, Fall 1995

Published by the
Rhode Island Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education

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## ***COVER ART***

*Lay Thet, 9th grade student and Marjorie Gallo, teacher*
*Bain Junior High School, Cranston, Rhode Island*

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## * * PREAMBLE * *

***What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.***

*--- John Dewey*

Historically, Rhode Island has expected much from its educational system. In the future we will expect even more. The needs of a changing society place new and greater demands on students and on schools. Both must prepare for a future we cannot truly envision. Schools must prepare students not only to work, but to live, in the 21st century.

It is important to ask how well our current educational system has served Rhode Island, and how it must be improved and changed. Our speculations about life in the future are tested against what sociologists, economists, scientists and artists tell us that we may expect. Each of us filters these ideas through our own cultural, political and family experiences. We question what we will require from our educational institutions. How will we earn our livelihoods? What advances in technology, transportation, health, the arts and recreation will influence the way we live?

*Developing A Common Core of Learning - A Report on What We Heard* pays its respects to our past at the same time that it represents our promise to the future. ALL KIDS, not just some kids, deserve the best education. With this in mind together we will create an educational system that renews our society and prepares Rhode Island for the future.

## *INTRODUCTION ...*

Three important events provide the foundation of Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning. The nation's Governors drafted "America 2000" goals (now called *Goals 2000*) in 1989. In March 1994, these national educational goals were finally enacted into law. At the state level, the 21st Century Commission and the Rhode Island Skills Commission each drafted plans for the restructuring of Rhode Island's educational system and called for the citizens of the state to establish learner goals and high standards of performance for all of our students.

In 1992, the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education convened Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning Team, comprised of over 100 parents, educators, civic, business and corporate leaders. Together they researched the issues and conducted focus groups around the state. This work led to the development of a survey printed in five languages, and 200,000 were distributed throughout the state. It asked, *"What should all young adults in Rhode Island know and be able to do to meet the responsibilities and challenges of the 21st Century?"*

The responses were tabulated. Writers drawn from the larger team distilled the collected thoughts expressed by the respondents into Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning. This document represents the collective thinking of the citizens of our state about the goals of education.

The respondents identified four major goals of education in Rhode Island:

> ***Communication*** - reading, writing, speaking, listening and conversing effectively.
>
> ***Problem Solving*** - viewing learning as a lifelong process in which problem solving complements the body of knowledge by helping students acquire and apply new knowledge.
>
> ***Body of Knowledge*** - acquiring ideas and skills that have been passed on by past generations and that form the base for the future progress of society.
>
> ***Responsibility*** - accepting responsibility for oneself, one's learning, and one's role in society.

These areas are four dimensions of a whole rather than discrete segments that can be selected piecemeal. They balance knowledge of content, skills and attitudes. Thus, students in their studies concurrently acquire bodies of knowledge while communicating new learning, solving current problems and taking on responsibilities related to their learning. These goals form the basis for developing more explicit curriculum documents.

Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning is intended to guide schools and classroom teachers in the design of curriculum and instruction. It has a second and equally important purpose: to provide a forum for discussion among educators and the general public. We must share a common vision and direction for education in our state if it is to serve us all equally well.

## *COMMUNICATION*

***"It is imperative that good oral and written communication skills are stressed."*** (respondent #00361)

***"Communication via written words, oral expression or computer transmission will be a necessity in the 21st century."*** (respondent #02584)

One of the hallmarks of an educated person is the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and converse effectively. People with well-developed communication skills understand others and express themselves well. In addition, they give and receive constructive feedback, adapting their words and actions as reason and circumstances dictate.

***Students who have acquired a common core of communication skills will...***

**Read widely and attentively by ...**

- Reading for a variety of purposes: to gain understanding, to appreciate the experience of others, to gather information and to enjoy leisure time.
- Building meaning while reading, determining the relative importance of ideas and connecting what is read to prior knowledge, other sources and their own experiences.
- Reading critically: distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying inconsistencies and recognizing bias.
- Utilizing reference materials, both print and electronic (e.g. dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and original sources via Internet) and features of written and electronic texts (e.g. tables of contents, indices, chapters, headings and electronic search strategies).
- Following written instructions.

**Write persuasively and expressively by ...**

- Writing for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Writing as a way of discovering and clarifying ideas.
- Engaging in a process that involves planning, organizing, revising and editing one's own writing.
- Supporting ideas through the use of facts, examples, quotations and arguments.

***Communication* (continued)**

- Gathering information, taking accurate notes and summarizing accurately, noting sources properly.
- Using correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and other language conventions.
- Making use of print and electronic reference tools, such as handbooks and grammar and spelling checking programs, to locate language conventions.
- Using technology and software including text, data, graphics and communication, to produce documents.

**Speak, listen and converse intelligently by ...**

- Listening and conversing in order to share information, build relationships and promote understanding
- Engaging constructively in oral exchange of ideas.
- Asking and answering questions.
- Delivering oral presentations to a group, using appropriate language, information, gestures and media.
- Conducting and being the subject of an interview.
- Forming, expressing, and defending a point of view.
- Giving, understanding and following spoken instructions.
- Listening carefully and giving constructive feedback.
- Communicating with others using electronic media (e.g., audio, video, Internet).
- Communicating with others in more than one language.
- Communicating with people from various social, occupational and cultural groups.
- Working to clarify misunderstandings and to resolve conflicts peacefully and democratically.
- Understanding the impact of one's language on others.

## ***PROBLEM SOLVING***

***"They should be able to reason a problem out in a step-by-step fashion until a worthwhile solution is reached."*** (respondent #00527)

A rapidly changing world requires all people to be lifelong learners and problem solvers. Along with the common body of knowledge and skills needed for a productive life, students need to learn continuously and apply what they have learned critically and creatively to solve real life problems. Lifelong learning and problem solving are not separate from the common body of knowledge that comprises the content of schooling; rather, they complement it by helping students to acquire new knowledge and to apply it in original and effective ways.

***Students who have acquired a common core of problem solving skills will ...***

**Learn continuously by ...**

- Setting high standards in developing personal learning goals.
- Accepting and pursuing challenges - stretching personal limits.
- Working cooperatively and/or independently as the situation demands.
- Using learning approaches that are suitable to personal, community, and work related settings.
- Giving, receiving, and evaluating constructive criticism.
- Learning from failure.

**Solve problems effectively by ...**

- Defining a problem, posing meaningful questions, generating and testing alternative hypotheses, establishing criteria for measuring success, and determining a course of action.
- Planning and organizing a problem solving task requiring multiple steps, sustained concentration and long term commitment.
- Demonstrating flexibility, inventiveness and persistence, revising a problem solving plan as needed.
- Seeking advice and information, presenting data and analyses, persuading others of a particular course of action and modifying plans in light of the input of others.

***Problem Solving* (continued)**

- Using appropriate techniques and technologies in acquiring new knowledge and skills and in researching and solving a problem.
- Observing, selecting and recording meaningful data.
- Accessing, applying, interpreting, recording, evaluating and integrating information from a variety of sources and subject areas.
- Questioning the validity of sources, recognizing fallacies, detecting a writer's or a speaker's point of view and examining how facts and language are being used.
- Considering and weighing diverse perspectives, then defending a decision to accept, reject or modify each.
- Employing a range of strategies, including those which involve the application of technologies.
- Evaluating the quality and success of their own work.

## BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

***"Successful education can be a blend of teamwork, skills, historical knowledge, scientific application, including the use of technology and multicultural awareness. The elements are not presented piecemeal but are taught in context."*** *(respondent #01937)*

People today build upon the ideas and skills of the civilization that went before them. This Body of Knowledge forms the base for schooling in the modern world. This schooling relies on a knowledge of human thought and creativity from historical, scientific and social perspectives. The focus here is the application of knowledge in improving the quality of life for the individual in the community, workplace and society. The statements in this section are not intended to be an exhaustive catalog of subjects or precise content standards, but they suggest the general knowledge that all students should acquire and be able to apply.

***Students who have acquired this body of knowledge will ...***

**Know about themselves by ...**

- Understanding the workings of the human body and mind in order to maintain personal health.
- Applying information and skills that enable successful functioning in everyday tasks.
- Developing skills necessary for employment.

**Know about others by ...**

- Understanding the American political system in order to fulfill the duties of citizenship for personal and community purposes.
- Understanding the principles of the American economic system that allows the individual to participate in and benefit from that system.
- Showing an appreciation of their own culture and the culture of others, knowing the influence of cultural differences upon human interaction and having the ability to employ this understanding in improving cross-cultural relations.
- Understanding the influence of religious views and values on past and present society.

***Body of Knowlege (continued)***

- Developing an understanding of literature and the arts as a reflection of values shaped by social or historical forces.
- Appreciating the major art forms: drama, dance, music and the visual arts.
- Having a basic understanding of the history and structure of the English language.

**Know about the natural world by ...**

- Demonstrating an understanding of people's relationship to the environment, the influence of the environment on human life and the use of the environment in conserving and improving life.
- Understanding key concepts of mathematics, science and technology; the relationships between and among them; and their strengths and limitations.
- Recognizing the impact of technology on the workplace and society, including implications for the environment.
- Recognizing the importance of mathematics, science and technology in daily life.
- Interacting and communicating confidently with others in using mathematics, science and technology to ask and answer relevant questions.
- Using scientific processes, mathematical reasoning and technology to solve problems and build an understanding of the natural world.

## ***RESPONSIBILITY***

***"I believe that all young adults should #1 learn how to accept responsiblility for their actions both academically and socially."*** (respondent #00142)

A pillar of the Common Core of Learning must be responsibility. The 21st Century will require citizens to take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their society. By gaining an awareness of their responsibilities to themselves as individuals and to society as a whole, the youth of Rhode Island will be better equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

All Rhode Islanders, therefore, must be encouraged to take responsibility for their lives and the role each will play in society. As lifelong learners they will act on goals that they set for themselves, develop healthy habits and establish positive relationships, at home, in the workplace and in the community. They will develop personal characteristics that enable them to become good citizens, family members, and parents, as well as productive workers.

***Students who exhibit responsible behavior will ...***

**Accept personal responsibility for the well being of self and society by ...**

- Developing habits to ensure physical, emotional and mental health.
- Making informed career and life decisions.
- Developing strategies to manage stress.
- Coping successfully with negative peer pressure and media influences.
- Making and keeping healthy relationships.
- Buying and consuming responsibly.
- Understanding how technology affects human culture, the workplace and the environment.
- Being aware of our interdependence with the environment.

**Work responsibly in groups and as an individual by ...**

- Working cooperatively with others in achieving a group decision or goal.
- Sharing, delegating, leading, contributing and following through.
- Respecting opposing points of view.
- Carrying through responsibilities and completing tasks.
- Knowing how and when to negotiate or compromise to reach a consensus.
- Using technology appropriately.

***Responsibility* (continued)**

**Acquire the necessary skills, competencies and personal qualities to succeed in the workplace by ...**

- Understanding the multiple pathways through which one may prepare for various careers.
- Applying the body of knowledge, communication and problem solving approaches appropriately in one's occupations.
- Understanding the value of labor and developing a work ethic.
- Managing time and resources effectively.
- Being flexible in adapting to new situations, analyzing information, and solving problems through the use of existing and emerging technology.
- Setting high personal standards for quality work which satisfies the needs of clients and customers.
- Demonstrating dependability, honesty, productivity, leadership and initiative.

**Show tolerance for human diversity by ...**

- Learning about differences among people, religions and cultures.
- Understanding the causes of prejudice and its contribution to social injustice.
- Showing courtesy towards others.
- Respecting the rights of all people.

**Understand the importance of family and community by ...**

- Practicing the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Engaging in meaningful service to the community.
- Understanding the ethical dimensions of citizenship and parenting.

**Respond to challenges with integrity, honesty, and courage by ...**

- Maintaining high standards of academic honesty.
- Acting in an honest manner when dealing with others.
- Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
- Setting priorities and accepting responsibilities in the home, family and community.

**Display a strong sense of self-worth and personal competence by ...**

- Exhibiting self-respect and respect for others.
- Relying on strong interpersonal skills.
- Setting challenging, realistic goals.
- Knowing his or her own heritage.
- Developing and pursuing personal interests and goals.

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# Literacy for ALL Students

## The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework

To meet the needs of a rapidly changing society every student in Rhode Island must attain high levels of achievement. In the English Language Arts, these challenges require that students be able to communicate effectively, to read capably, to work productively and to think critically and strategically. The standards in the framework describe the performance expected for all students in the English Language Arts. These standards will provide answers to what students need to know and be able to do to lead responsible, fulfilling lives as workers, citizens and individuals.

The development of these standards results from the broad-based call for national reforms and demands that all students be fully literate citizens. National education standards are called for by the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, a bipartisan effort begun during the Bush administration and continued in the Clinton administration. The act calls on states to formulate and adopt 'world-class' standards and performance assessments for all students.

To address that challenge, the Rhode Island Department of Education distributed an education survey to the people of Rhode Island in June 1994. It asked the following question:

**What should all young adults in Rhode Island know and be able to do to meet the responsibilities and challenges of the 21st century?**

The responses fell into four broad categories - communication, problem solving, a common body of knowledge, and responsibility - and formed the basis of Rhode Island's **Common Core of Learning**. The Common Core of Learning provides the backdrop for the development of specific content area frameworks which describe how subject matter and instruction can be organized to achieve the desired competencies at various performance levels. These frameworks, in turn, will be used by local school districts as a guide to develop curriculum.

Rhode Island practitioners in English Language Arts called upon the most widely accepted beliefs, research and practice to develop the standards for what students need to know and be able to do. The English Language Arts framework outlines those standards all Rhode Island students must achieve to become active, critical and creative users of print, spoken and visual language. They will prepare students for a changing workplace and a changing world.

"People with well-developed communication skills understand others and express themselves well." (Rhode Island Common Core of Learning). The language arts serve a wide variety of purposes, from the highly abstract and poetic to the practical demands of everyday living, and are the cornerstone of an individual's education. In addition to reading, writing and conversing, they include the ability to understand and use the wide array of visual and auditory texts of a

highly technological society, including, for example, photographs, charts, advertisements, and computer information networks.

Ongoing research on how children acquire language yields several broad conclusions, around which there is wide consensus.

- Language is acquired through interaction with other people. Such interaction often includes reading and being read to aloud.

- Language acquisition must build upon what came before. The family is the first educator, and subsequent instruction must employ that prior learning.

- Everyone employs his or her own distinctive background knowledge to learn language; fluency in language is developed through increasingly more practice with mature language use.

The goal of English language arts instruction remains the proficient use of English, in addition to any other languages a student may speak. But the path by which students achieve that goal may differ for students whose first language is not English.

English language arts instruction, then, should involve communication between students and other people, both within the classroom and in the community and workplace. Furthermore, English language arts involve processes that connect to bodies of knowledge. They are not fragmented, isolated acts of speaking, writing, listening and viewing. We link the processes of reading and writing to content.

The standards outlined in this framework constitute an interdependent whole. Instruction in one implies instruction in each and all of the others. Moreover, since language use pervades every aspect of our lives, instruction in the language arts must be integral to all the subject areas, not just the "English" or "language arts" curriculum. Ensuring the ability of all students to communicate effectively must be the responsibility of all instructors, in all courses of study.

The chart on the facing page summarizes the *draft* Rhode Island Standards for English Language Arts. On the back of this flyer you will find a sample standard expanded to provide additional information on what the standards call for at various levels.

What it might look like in a Rhode Island classroom:

*The first grade teacher opened up a bag of apples that she had bought at a local Rhode Island orchard. She proceeded to cut open the apple crossways and the children noticed that the seeds were set out in the shape of a star. The teacher and children talked about the seeds and planned on subsequent days to compare the seeds of different kinds of apples and plant them. Today, however, she had the students dictate their observations of the apples. The first sentence read,* "Rosa said, "The seeds look like a little star." Matthew said, "The apple is big, but the seeds are small." *Other children offered their sentences until the chart was filled. After some re-reading exercises, the children identified words they knew, first in the story and then in isolation. Finally, the teacher taught the beginning sound of "big", a word most children now knew and ended the lesson by showing her students how to make "new words" by changing the "l" in "look" to a "b" and forming the word "book." In this lesson the teacher had used all that the children had to offer - their oral language and their recent experience - to teach reading, words and phonics included, in a meaningful way. In addition, the children explored scientific principles while learning to read.*

**COMMUNICATION - All students will be effective communicators in varied settings and for varied purposes.**

*Effective communication is necessary in every aspect of our personal, social, educational, occupational and civic lives. Students must have the ability to listen, speak, view, read and write clearly. Students must understand how to gather and use information to work with others, solve conflicts and share decisions.*

**RESPONSE TO TEXT - All students will demonstrate the ability to understamd and respond to a wide variety of text.**

*Students will read, view, comprehend and respond to varied text. Text, in today's world, includes traditional and contemporary poems, plays, stories, letters, essays, interviews, books, magazines, newspapers, visual media and technical materials.*

**CREATION AND PRESENTATION OF TEXT - All students will compose clear text in a variety of forms for many purposes.**

*Composing processes include thinking, creating, refining, and presenting text. Awareness of pupose and audience influences the composing strategies of the writer and speaker.*

**STUDENT VOICE - All students will demonstrate the power and effectiveness of voice through the language arts.**

*Voice is both an inner and acquired ability which writers and speakers develop from experience and knowledge. Voice allows the author to communicate ideas persuasively, creatively and powerfully.*

**AWARENESS AND EVALUATION OF LEARNING PROCESSES - All students will know the processes used to construct and convey meaning through text. They will develop and apply criteria for the evaluation and appreciation of their own and others' text.**

*Students will understand how they gain meaning from text, how they create text to communicate meaning, and how their previous knowledge and experiences affect text. Students will be able to judge the worth of what they read, write, speak, hear and represent.*

**INQUIRY AND TECHNOLOGY - All students will investigate issues and problems using a variety of current and emerging technologies in school and work settings.**

*Inquiry is vital to the learning process. Technology in this Information Age provides global access, linking students to the world. Using language arts to access, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and apply the myriad sources of information available through current and emerging technologies, students will investigage issues and solve problems in all aspects of their world. These technologies presently include computers and their expansive capabilities, telecommunications, and audio-visual media.*

**ENDURING THEMES - All students will use themes and topics from text to make connections and demonstrate an understanding of commonalities and diversity through exploration of universal issues.**

*Themes (such as friendship, power, quest) link cultures across time and place. Students will develop understandings of enduring themes as they make connections and understandings of themselves in relation to text from different content areas, time periods and cultural groups.*

**LITERACY AND THE COMMUNITY - All students will develop and apply their language skills using the community as a learning laboratory.**

*Students must develop and use the language arts beyond the school setting to recognize their relevance to daily life. Through interaction with civic organizations, social organizations and business and industry, students will apply language arts skills effectively.*

**LANGUAGE ARTS AND CITIZENSHIP - All students will use language effectively and responsibly as members of a democratic society.**

*Language can be used to inform and persuade and thereby bring about dramatic changes in a democratic, multicultural society. Students will apply and understand language skillfully, effectively and responsibly.*

An annotated sample page from the **RI English Language Arts** framework:

**LANGUAGE ARTS AND CITIZENSHIP - All students will use language effectively and responsibly as members of a democratic society.**

*Language can be used to inform and persuade and thereby bring about dramatic changes in a democratic, multicultural society. Students will apply and understand language skillfully, effectively and responsibly.*

| *Descriptors* | *Level 1 (Grades K-4)* | *Level 4 (Grades 11-12)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Students will use a variety of language arts skills to become more aware of themselves as community members.** | Identify and explore school and community issues and problems. | Analyze the persuasive power of language and how it can become an instrument of change in their community, nation and world. |
| **Students will make informed decisions from multiple perspectives.** | Observe situations, predict possible outcomes, and explain the consequences. | Use language responsibly to inform others about local, state, national and global concerns. |
| **Students will use language appropriate to purpose, message and audience.** | Observe language arts in use and identify/discuss its impact relative to the intended audience. | Recognize the relationship between the individual and society in the application of effective and responsible language. |

**For further information, or to obtain any of the documents mentioned in this brochure, please contact:**
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**This framework, and other related information, is also available on the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's home page –** *http://www.ri.net/RIDE/*